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Midwest Folklone

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Folklore at Midcentury*

By STITH THOMPSON

The appearance of the first number of *Midwest Folklore* in the first quarter of the new half-century affords an unusual opportunity for folklorists to pause for a moment and examine their past accomplishments, their present situation, and their hopes for the future. At various times in the past we have done something of this kind. I recall that at the fiftieth anniversary meeting of the American Folklore Society in 1937 such a synopsis was attempted. At that time we listened to Professor Boas' excellent summary of folklore in the United States during the previous fifty years. Though it is not possible for me to go back that far, my memory does extend to the early years of the twentieth century and it may not be unprofitable to look back over these years and see what folklore has looked like, at least from the point of view of one observer who has taken some part in the development of the field. This report will obviously be somewhat biased since it comes from my personal relations with many folklorists and it is influenced by my own interests.

Until about 1908 I was not aware that such a thing as folklore existed. I had gone through the conventional university course up to my senior year, and in spite of being reared in an area that I now realize is rich in folk tradition I knew nothing of all this. In a fashion thoroughly characteristic of that time I became interested in folklore through a course on the English and Scottish popular ballad. To most students of folklore in those days the subject was entirely concerned with ballads and more especially with ballad criticism. This was a period when everyone was talking about the communal origin of ballads, but the teaching even of ballads was confined to a very few places—Harvard I think, possibly Princeton, Haverford, The University of California, and occasionally the University of Wisconsin. It was at the last named university that I imbibed a certain skepticism about the communal origin of ballads from Arthur Beatty. Later I was to confirm this skepticism by talks with Louise Pound. Though the general scope of ballad study was somewhat expanded about the time of which I speak by the publication of Lomax's collection of cowboy songs, it was a good many years before this material worked itself into the usual curriculum of ballad study.

* Based upon a paper given at the Popular Literature Group of the Modern Language Association of America in New York, December 27, 1950.

By 1912, when I went to Harvard and listened to Kittredge's lectures on the ballad, the issue had been rather tightly drawn between the communalists and the anti-communalists. The appearance of Miss Pound's articles and eventually of her book in opposition to the communalists' theory saved me from the youthful indiscretion of writing a critique myself.

For twenty-five years or more the principal burden of the American Folklore Society was carried by a group of anthropologists rather than by literary folklorists. The *Journal of American Folklore* was edited by Franz Boas and later by some of his disciples. There came to be a feeling on the part of the literary folklorists, or at least some of them, that the anthropologists had taken over, and many of them resigned their memberships from the Society. We may now be running the danger of underestimating the value of the anthropologists to the folklore societies and to the general cause of folklore over the last fifty years. We must, I believe, agree that a great deal of the folklore that was collected and even studied during the early years of the century, was amateurish in the extreme. The anthropologists with their much more rigid system of investigation and with their stricter standards of scholarship made the *Journal of American Folklore* scholarly, if at times rather drab and uninspiring to the amateur collector of folklore and to the man whose interest is primarily in literature. We should by all means keep these good points of the anthropologists in the future development of folklore in this country. It seems to me only the wildest type of nervousness that would fear the domination of folklore here by the anthropological group. They are so far outnumbered by the many literary and amateur folklorists in the country that I am certain they would never make folklore study go in a direction that it did not wish to.

There had been a good deal of contact with Europeans before 1900, especially by F. J. Child and T. F. Crane, who knew what the Europeans were doing. On the whole, the folklorists of Europe had little knowledge of our activities. But the situation has been largely corrected in the last thirty or forty years, and Americans have published in European publications and series, and many of the foremost European folklorists have spent some time in America. Last summer about a dozen of them were here for our International Folklore Conference at Indiana University. Gradually there has also been established a rather close contact with the folklorists of Latin America, and within the last few years, with some of those of Asia. A knowledge of what other continents are doing is of very great value to everyone doing serious work in American folklore.

Some local folklore societies were formed early in the century, but the great movement toward the establishment of such groups has come within the last twenty or thirty years. A number of them have sponsored publications and they have annual and sometimes more frequent meetings. These societies have been most important for bringing together amateurs and people merely interested in listening to folklore or hearing about it; but it is on a soil prepared by such a general interest that the study and utilization of popular tradition can best flourish.

We have all seen folklore become a very popular subject of discussion and comment. It has invaded the radio programs of every section of the country, and for a much longer time, has appeared on phonograph records, some of them very good and some of them inexcusably bad. We have seen the vogue for hillbilly songs carried to an extreme, and the cowboy has become a cult, especially with youngsters. Folk dancing, real and modified, has flourished and there has also grown up a great demand for professional folksingers. The folktale, on the other hand, has had no great popularity, unless we include the tall tales which gather around the figures of Paul Bunyan and such pseudo-folk heroes.

During the last generation folklore has achieved an increasing autonomy. Where we used to meet as a section of another society we now have our own gatherings. The last number of the *Journal of American Folklore* showed us how many universities are now conducting courses and sometimes entire curricula in folklore, and the subject has received national recognition in the establishment and maintenance of the Folklore Section of the Library of Congress.

At this midcentury moment, then, we find that folklore has made real advances in popularity over a century ago. It may be well to look about us and see exactly what that kind of popularity means. For several years I have been having something to do with the administration of folklore conferences. In this capacity we have developed a mailing list of those presumably interested in attending, and we have also seen the kinds of people who turn up at such conferences. I should like to suggest some of the groups who manifest interest of this kind and who feel that it is worth their while to make a journey to attend regular folklore meetings.

Indispensable on such occasions are the singers and storytellers, professional or really from the folk. They come bringing their guitars or their recordings and always add interest and color to the meetings. There will be a sprinkling of teachers of all the grades from kindergarten to college freshmen. Some of these will be interested

primarily in acquainting their students with the folktales, music, and dances of their community and of the rest of America. Others want their pupils to learn how to collect material from their neighborhoods.

Another group attending our meetings will be the collectors themselves. These will nearly always be specialists of one kind or another. They may be interested in songs, some of them exclusively in old traditional songs, others in so-called folksongs of any kind. Occasionally one will confine himself to bringing together superstitions or proverbs; sometimes he is a gatherer of tall tales. A very interesting kind of collector which we have seen during the last few years is the man or woman interested in regional and group folklore, of the Shakers it may be or the Mormons, the lumberjacks or the cowboys, the miners or the steel mill workers.

There is sure to be at least one or two students of jazz and of other modern music supposedly related to folklore. The regular folklorist may be mystified by the presence of some of the composers of the so-called "people's songs," and will be astonished to learn what queer forms some of his old favorite songs have taken in order to reform the world. There will certainly be representatives of the folk festivals, some of them simple arrangers of small local meetings, and some with a complicated and highly successful promotion technique. At least two groups will probably make little pretense to being folklorists at all, but are along because of a remoter interest. These are the writers of children's books and authors who use folklore themes. One may count on seeing some revivers of folk art and folk music, interested mainly in pictorial art, designs, songs, or dances. Especially if they are good square dance callers they add a good deal of zest to any folklore meeting. Lurking in the background we may find a compiler or two of folklore anthologies hoping to feather his nest, and possibly a literary critic ready to show all folklorists their proper place.

Anyone not out of sympathy with the age will agree that in addition to its serious study there are certain good uses to be made of popular tradition. It will always be great fun to gather folklore in the field, and I am certain that the production of folklore for interested audiences will always give the field worker a legitimate outlet for his ability as singer or tale teller. For some of the groups of people just mentioned, however, I must confess a lack of enthusiasm. It may be heresy to say so, but I should regret it if a large part of the curriculum of our lower schools should be taken up with folklore at the expense of a general all-around education. I am dubious of the value of children's collecting of folklore except insofar

as it makes them happy to do so. I do not believe in folklore as an expression of any particular social class. To me folklore is tradition and is not something to be doctored up so as to serve as political propaganda. I am not responsive to hillbilly music and feel that it has very little to do with any actual study of the lore of the people.

I think I may not be alone in saying that I have heard often enough to last at least three lifetimes the few adventures of Paul Bunyan and his big ox, padded out, as it often is, to fill a full-sized volume. There does get to be a time when such folk tradition runs thin and the repetition of the same material ceases to be amusing, emotionally stirring, or otherwise satisfying to the reader or hearer accustomed to the tradition of great literature or great music. This position is doubtless overstated, but it is clear that the collector of folklore is often so steeped in the life of his special group that he entirely overestimates the artistic value of that which he has brought in on records or has published. On the other hand, the utilizer of folklore, whether in anthologies, in concerts, or in folk festivals, ordinarily recognizes the fact that it is necessary for him to make some adaptation of an idea of folklore before it will be palatable to the modern audience. Frequently those who are enthusiastic over folk products are concerned entirely with the very finest examples of these products. Of course, there are some very beautiful old ballads, some exquisite pieces of folk handiwork, some gems of real philosophy in folk proverbs, and some fine pieces of humor in folktales; and these are, or should be, a part of the cultural heritage of our own generation. But it is a debatable question as to how far we should try to condition a new generation to an indiscriminate acceptance of the songs, tales, dances, and art forms of their pioneer ancestors.

A different motive actuates the man or woman who is primarily a student of folklore. He is not a reformer, either of artistic taste or the amusement habits of his generation. He recognizes folklore for what it is, that part of the culture which is handed down by tradition from one generation to another. Living in a world of books, concerts, phonographs, radio, and international contacts, he sees all this body of traditional material as something immensely interesting in itself. He observes that each item has had its history and that the tracing of its history often takes one very far in an understanding of the great complex of forces which have produced a people.

From the point of view of the man or woman who is studying folklore, there are several necessary steps if he is to do his tasks satis-

factorily. It may be well for us to consider how these stages in the study of folklore are developing in America today.

Primary and indispensable for all folklore study is the work of the collector. Though the man with the notebook or recording machine may feel that his activity is an end in itself and that nothing further need be done after the material is brought together, the student is interested in the results primarily as a basis for his studies. He is therefore vitally concerned that the collecting be done as well as possible, and he keeps dinning into the ears of amateurs the importance of making their collections authentic. During the last few years the use of recording machines in the field has helped greatly to assure that the material brought in is actually that which has been heard. For this end, collector's handbooks are also much needed. One hears a great deal of talk about them, but none seems to be actually approaching completion. A first class book based upon the experience of successful collectors and giving the most up-to-date information about techniques in the field is greatly desired.

In addition to collecting, a proper assembling of the records and recordings is needed, either in small private organizations or in large national archives. The Library of Congress is taking a lead in this respect, and more is to be expected in that direction in the years to come. There are even now being developed a number of small private archives, and one of the problems of the future is the proper coordination of these private records with centralized collections.

Indexes of all kinds are continually being perfected and a better knowledge of the many different genres of folklore is being brought about by courses in the universities and by some of our folklore journals. Model studies are under way and students are having good practice in the investigation of separate items of folklore. Most scholars in the field are recognizing that the subject embraces at least four different large divisions: collecting, archiving, making folklore available to the public, and certain theoretical considerations to clarify thinking and activity. Collecting has been going on with great vigor in the last few years and it needs only to be properly directed and perhaps stimulated in certain areas. It would help if we had a better understanding of just where good collecting has been done and of just what areas remain to be explored. The necessary program of map-making of such areas has not even begun. On the side of archiving we need to approach the problem with a somewhat more professional exactness than we are likely to do and not have to learn from the bottom up everytime a new archive is begun. We should

recognize that several of the great European archives solved the basic problems many years ago and that we could get great help by learning from them. A good deal of progress was made in this direction at the Conference in Bloomington last summer when we had present in a single room practically all of the important archivists in the world.

In several special directions we may expect much further development in the years immediately before us. The first of these is in the collecting and studying of the folklore of rather recent immigrant groups. A good beginning has been made with the Czechoslovaks, the Lithuanians, the Poles, and the Armenians, to name but a few. New York, Detroit, and Chicago have been especially fruitful fields for such investigations. Another direction for development may seem to be very late in coming to our attention. We have not at all decided what we mean by folklore. I shall not attempt in this paper to give my own ideas on this subject, but it is fair to say that there is now no agreement by American folklorists as to what we are talking about. Is a comic strip appearing in our daily papers legitimately called folklore? Is a song made up for a definite propaganda purpose folklore? If folklore is not traditional, just where can we draw the line? Or perhaps it is not necessary that we draw any line at all and that we take in all experience as our province. For me it is impossible to get away from the idea of tradition as being the touchstone for everything that is to be included in the term folklore. But even then there remains the question of what kind of tradition. Shall we include all the manifestations of the life of the people as is done, for example, in the Scandinavian countries? Shall we increase the emphasis in folk art and crafts and develop our folk museums, or shall we confine ourselves to the expression of the people in traditional literature? Another theoretical point of view that must be explored in the future is the old distinction between the deductive and inductive approach. Shall we start off with saying, as, for example, one of the writers on folklore seems now to be urging, that all folk narrative comes from ritual and that studies of folklore should begin with that assumption and all study be designed to prove that thesis? Or shall we start off with no theory at all and merely find what we shall find? In some ways we seem to go in circles, so that the hard-won assumptions of one generation cease to be valid in another and we have to go back and debate the same problems that our ancestors thought they had settled.

It may be that some of the criticisms we are receiving from persons in other areas are well justified. It is entirely possible that

the curricula of our schools should be changed so as to substitute folklore for some of our conventional subjects. None of these are matters that are yet finally settled, and they remain to be discussed at length in the new half-century just opening.

We have long recognized that folklore is a subject which comes in between literature and anthropology. The next years may well bring first rate studies on the relation of folklore not only to these but also to such neighboring fields as history, sociology, and psychology. We folklorists stand at a point where there are so many voices calling to us that we are uncertain which to heed; but the time may come when we will analyze this situation so well that we know just what to do. Other fields of study have already passed this stage of development. They have had their amateurs; they have had their serious students; they have had to work out the relation between these groups as well as the relevance of their discipline to all the neighboring fields. They have learned to differentiate between the science and the art of their subject. Perhaps one of our great difficulties at the moment is that we have not been able to clarify that difference. In the near future we will doubtless have a great deal of debate and some heart-burning before we know definitely where we are going. We shall be criticized, as we have been criticized. But in spite of all this, there is so much vigor in folklore studies that we may well be optimistic about their future in the United States during the new half-century.

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

Robert Frost's Paul Bunyan: A Frontier Hero in New England Exile

By DANIEL G. HOFFMAN

The fame of Robert Frost as a regional poet is so great that, to many people south of Boston, to copy New England is to copy him. As Mark Van Doren has said, Frost earns his universality by reaping "all the advantage there is in being true to a particular piece of earth."¹ It is surprising that a poet who frequently draws upon his neighboring farms and farmers for atmosphere and character should so rarely use the fantasies that are as deeply rooted in New England's hills as the birches or the people themselves. Among the handful of Frost's poems on themes from popular tradition are "The Witch of Coös," "The Pauper Witch at Grafton," and a poem about Paul Bunyan. As "Paul's Wife" represents one of Frost's rare excursions into an American myth he has not himself created, it is interesting to see which values in this lore of the lumber camps he found most congenial to his own ideas, and to discover how he changed as well as preserved an old tradition in American folklore.

Tall tales of Paul Bunyan have been told among the lumberjacks for three-quarters of a century.² Descended from earlier yarns of the swaggering frontiersman and the shrewd Yankee peddler, the lumberjack stories were originally created to offset fear of the wilderness and the hazards of logging. The teller and his audience took to themselves the fabulous strength and inventive cleverness of a hero who could solve with ease the most baffling problems that beset them.³ In the last forty years this traditional lore has inspired a growing literature in which the tales are usually restyled to appeal to an audience far wider than the limited occupational group. Hundreds of periodical pieces and dozens of books have helped to transform Paul Bunyan from the hero of an isolated, anachronistic folk

¹ Mark Van Doren, "The Permanence of Robert Frost," *American Scholar*, V (Spring, 1936), 198.

² Printed versions of genuine folktales from oral tradition are scarce. Earl C. Beck presents several good examples in his *Songs of the Michigan Lumberjacks* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1942). These are reprinted by Harold W. Felton in *Legends of Paul Bunyan* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 32, 189, 311, and 313; see also p. 101 for a tale collected in 1916 by K. B. Steward and H. A. Watt. Most of the other "legends" in this anthology are popularizations, not folktales.

³ For an analysis of Bunyan lore in relation to the lumberjack folk culture, see D. G. Hoffman, "Folk Tales of Paul Bunyan: Themes, Structure, Style, Sources," *Western Folklore*, IX (October, 1950), 302-320.

culture to a national symbol of size, strength, cleverness, and, in certain versions, of the benevolent wisdom of Business Management under Free Enterprise.⁴

Appealing as the Bunyan stories in popularized form have been for an ever-expanding public, thus far only three major poets have turned to this traditional or semitradeional lore for source material or inspiration. In *The People, Yes* (1936), Carl Sandburg drew extensively on the Bunyan yarns, and in 1941 W. H. Auden wrote an unpublished operetta about the superlumberjack and his fabulous camp.⁵ However, the first poetic use of the Bunyan material was made by Robert Frost. "Paul's Wife" appeared in the *Century Magazine* for November, 1921. Although sufficiently popular to have been reprinted in several collections of his work,⁶ this poem has been neglected by most of Frost's serious readers. G. R. Elliott remarked in 1925 that "such a poem as 'Paul's Wife,' with its humorous-pathetic Pygmalion of the lumber-camps," had replaced "the few realistic-pathological elements that appeared in 'North of Boston.'"⁷ Twenty years later Louis Untermeyer, himself the author of the most successful literary rendering of the Bunyan tales,⁸ introduced "Paul's Wife" in a Frost anthology by noting that the poem

supplies a fresh figure and reveals an unknown side of Paul Bunyan Robert Frost makes the story his own. He presents something about Paul Bunyan which cannot be found in the books, an imaginative something as fantastic as any of the legends, but far more tender and touching, and stubbornly proud.⁹

Otherwise, "Paul's Wife" has escaped critical notice. Yet the poem has an unperceived significance: it gives us a key to the ways this Yankee spokesman of the individual's integrity responded to the individualism of the frontier. "Paul's Wife" shows us what he found significant in the closest approximation to legend produced in that climate of American culture where the individual most nearly reigned supreme.

⁴ For a bibliography of this material see Felton, op. cit., pp. 379-407.

⁵ Elsewhere I have examined these literary treatments of the Bunyan materials: "Sandburg and 'The People': His Literary Populism Reappraised," *Antioch Review*, X (Summer, 1950), 265-278; and "Auden's American Demigod," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* [Forthcoming, probably Sept., 1951].

⁶ Robert Frost, "Paul's Wife," *Century Magazine*, CIII (November, 1921), 84-86. Reprinted in *New Hampshire*, New York, 1923, pp. 44-48; *Collected Poems* (Garden City: 1936), pp. 235-239; and in Louis Untermeyer, editor, *The Pocket Book of Robert Frost's Poems* (New York: 1936), pp. 40-45.

⁷ G. R. Elliott, "An Undiscovered America in Frost's Poetry," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, I (July, 1925), 210.

⁸ Louis Untermeyer, *The Wonderful Adventures of Paul Bunyan* (New York: The Heritage Press, 1946).

⁹ Untermeyer, *The Pocket Book of Robert Frost's Poems*, p. 39.

II

Although he has lived most of his life in or near the original lumberjack country, Mr. Frost has evidently based his poem on a collection of tales from the other end of America: *Paul Bunyan Comes West*, by Ida Virginia Turney.¹⁰ This was the second book to be published about Paul Bunyan, preceded only by an advertising pamphlet Mr. W. B. Laughead had prepared for the Red River Lumber Company of Minneapolis in 1914. As the other Bunyan material in print at that time consisted only of a few scattered contributions to lumbering magazines and Western newspapers, a short notice in *The Nation* by Constance Rourke, and an academic article by Professor Homer Watt, we may conclude that Mr. Frost was attracted to Paul Bunyan by Miss Turney's tales alone, and not by any prior fame of their hero.¹¹

This is the principal passage from her chapbook upon which "Paul's Wife" is based:

A feller by the name of Murphy tells 'bout how Paul found his wife in the heart of a great white pine an' didn't never let no one see her but 'tain't so. Paul's wife wuz regular folks an' she never set in no moonlight spoonin' with Paul She cooked for 300 men, usin' a donkey boiler with the top tore off to bile beans in when the extra hands wuz needed.¹²

The first sentence of this quotation is unique among the oral or popularized versions of Paul Bunyan. Nowhere else is this delicate suggestion approached, and even here it is introduced only to serve as contrast to the standard exaggerations of frontier comedy. Yet of all the motifs Miss Turney included, this was the one which most appealed to Robert Frost. And this is how, in his expert hands, Miss Turney's rough hint was polished into lyricism and dignity:

It was gone.

And then beyond the open water, dim with midges,
Where the log drive lay pressed against the boom,
It slowly rose a person, rose a girl,
Her wet hair heavy on her like a helmet,
Who, leaning on a log looked back at Paul.

Falling in love across the twilight millpond.

¹⁰ (Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon Press, 1916). In 1928 this chapbook was reissued, with a little additional material, by Houghton Mifflin.

¹¹ The timber hero was unknown to most readers until the publication of two widely-known popularizations: Esther Shepherd, *Paul Bunyan* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1924); and James Stevens, *Paul Bunyan* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1925).

¹² Turney, op. cit. (1928 edition), p. 8.

More than a mile across the wilderness
 They sat together half-way up a cliff
 In a small white niche let into it, the girl
 Brightly, as if a star played on the place,
 Paul darkly, like her shadow.¹³

This naiad born from a pine tree is more reminiscent of Longfellow's Nokomis than of any female American folk figure. To see this one need only compare her to Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett and the other frontier ladies of oral tradition.¹⁴

As for Paul himself,

He'd been the hero of the mountain camps
 Ever since, just to show them, he had slipped
 The bark of a whole tamarack off whole,
 As clean as boys do off a willow twig
 To make a willow whistle on a Sunday
 In April by subsiding meadow brooks.¹⁵

The tamarack trick had been told for generations, and was one of the earliest stories to be printed. But in comparing Bunyan's feat to what boys do on April Sundays "by subsiding meadow brooks," Frost puts himself completely outside the story. The oral tales were always told as though the raconteur had known Paul Bunyan, a convention Miss Turney followed in having her spokesman a former member of Bunyan's crew. But the narrator of "Paul's Wife" is no lumberjack. The tale is told by someone who learned it from Murphy, the only man who saw Paul find his bride. In the beginning,

To drive Paul out of any lumber camp
 All that was needed was to say to him,
 'How is the wife, Paul?'—and he'd disappear.
 Some said it was because he had no wife,
 And hated to be twitted on the subject.¹⁶

But no one wanted to drive Paul away. With his great prowess he was welcome anywhere, stripping the tamaracks, toting the loads by letting the sun shrink the wet leather harness—"You know Paul could do wonders."

¹³ Frost, "Paul's Wife," lines 105-110, 131-136.

¹⁴ See Richard M. Dorson, editor, *Davy Crockett, American Comic Legend* (New York: Rockland Editions, 1939), pp. xv-xxvi, 20-23, 47-56. For instance, "Sal Fungus war one of the most poundiferous gals in old Alligator Clearing . . . she could scalp an Injun, skin a bear, grin down hickory nuts, laugh the bark off a pine tree, swim stark up a cataract, gouge out alligator's eyes, dance a rock to pieces, sink a steamboat, blow out the moonlight . . . sing a wolf to sleep and scratch his hide off. But her heart grew too big; and when I left her to go to Texas, it burst like an airthquake, and poor Sal died." *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁵ Frost, *op. cit.*, lines 17-22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, lines 1-5.

But I guess

The one about his jumping so's to land
With both his feet at once against the ceiling
And then land safely right side up again,
Back on the floor, is fact or pretty near fact.
Well this is such a yarn.¹⁷

III

These motifs are all that Frost uses from the oral Bunyan tales recorded by Miss Turney. What follows, however, is not "such a yarn" at all, although in telling it he does impart "fact or pretty near fact" with the scrupulous attention to detail that characterizes artistic lying everywhere. However, the restrained cadence and the diction of his blank verse are something else again. The style is Frost's alone. His is the conversational tone which made such verse seem strange and radical in 1921, but beyond the changes of taste or fashion in 1951. Of course it has its sources in New England's hardbitten speech. It would seem that Frost has given voice to what his taciturn neighbors might think and feel but seldom say. However, the idiom is a personal achievement of poetic discipline, and bears little resemblance to the exuberant lingo of the frontier even when some of the selfsame anecdotes are clothed in it.

To frontiersman or lumberjack, the feats of Paul Bunyan were an end in themselves. Thus the proper idiom for folktales was one which caught the wit and power of their hero. But to Frost these anecdotes are only the appurtenances of a more important theme. Rather than the hero's supernatural strength and cleverness, he sees the human part of Paul as most essential. This is a side the folktales never did develop. Their greatest weakness was in characterization; despite the stupendous exploits and inventive cleverness, Paul himself often seemed a walking shadow. But Robert Frost makes character mean all. If his Paul is to be a hero, the heroism will be based upon a concept of Paul Bunyan as a man, not as a semimythical gigantic marionette.

Paul was what's called a terrible possessor.
Owning a wife with him meant owning her.
She wasn't anybody else's business,
Either to praise her, or so much as name her,
And he'd thank people not to think of her.
Murphy's idea was that a man like Paul
Wouldn't be spoken to about a wife
In any way the world knew how to speak.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., lines 49-54. *

Paul Bunyan stands apart from other men not because of his prowess (which they admire and welcome) but because of a sensitivity and a lyrical nature they do not share. Conquest of the wilderness lingers vestigially in Paul's "Same old feats of logging," but this is only incidental. Instead the emphasis is, unexpectedly, upon his marriage to nature's beauty, as well as on his identification with her power.

The poem refashions a popular legend to restate Frost's most constant theme—the sanctity, dignity, and inviolability of the individual. Thus "any way the world knew how to speak" will be in opposition to these qualities of Paul's spirit—an echo of the earlier poem, "Home Burial." In this vision of Paul Bunyan, individuality takes the sophisticated form of heightened sensibilities. And Paul, the vigorous hero of the woods, flees from his fellow-lumberjacks into the same sort of exile as that which makes the sensitive personality homeless in the modern world.

This is the new dimension Mr. Frost has given to Paul Bunyan. Yet however successfully a poet may assimilate a myth, there is always something in it which he cannot capture or subdue. Just because the myth was known before he found it, and will always be known more widely in other forms than his, the poem he writes cannot exist in independence. Rather, it must find its place in the atmosphere the myth itself creates, and, in the minds of those who know that myth, exert its influence upon all other versions. Thus may the tradition and the individual talent be mutually enriched. "Paul's Wife" is not among Frost's major or most successful works; yet it has an interest of its own in showing how a great poet gave a folk tradition a new interpretation, and reworked it into the patterns of his art.

Temple University

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, lines 150-157.

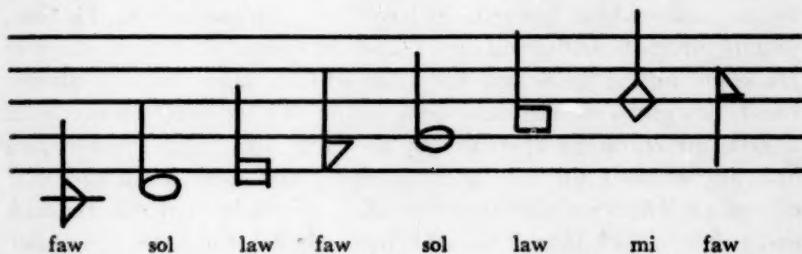
ALEXANDER AULD

and

The Ohio Harmonist

By MARY O. EDDY

The Ohio Harmonist by Alexander Auld is among the latest hymnbooks to provide shape notes for Ohio singers. In the first half of the nineteenth century Ohio was well supplied with "buckwheat notes," as they were called, for *The Beauties of Harmony* by Freeman Lewis and *The Missouri Harmony* by Allen D. Carden were in general use. Both of these books use the "faw-sol-law" (or fasola) scale, with but four shapes for the seven notes in the scale, thus:



In 1847, when Auld obtained a copyright for his book, *The Ohio Harmonist*, he made use of a seven-shape scale, the "doe, ray, and see" being added to the original four shapes. The public was warned not to use these new notes without Auld's permission, as they were his property. This is Auld's scale:



In 1846, Jesse B. Aiken of Philadelphia had issued his *The Christian Minstrel*, a book that attained enormous popularity. Aiken also used a seven-shape scale as well as a most peculiar system of indicating the key of the hymn. Auld may have had this system in mind,

as well as the round-note hymns of Lowell Mason when he wrote in the preface to the second edition of *The Ohio Harmonist*: "With all their excellence, however, they are far from being incapable of improvement." He purposes "to add to their value as a manual for singing by correcting what is erroneous, retrenching what is superfluous or unimportant, compressing what is prolix, elucidating what is obscure, determining what was left doubtful, supplying what is defective, and bringing up the whole to that state of improvement to which the labors of scientific and practical musicians of the present day have so greatly contributed." It is impossible for us, after a century to judge whether he felt that he had reached this ambitious goal. Our judgment is that he compiled a book which is very dull compared with the choice predecessors named above.

After so many years, one is naturally curious as to what religious denominations made use of the different old hymnbooks. A Presbyterian family whose descendants have lived continuously in this community since its settlement in 1812 owns copies of *The Beauties of Harmony* in the 1818 and the 1820 editions, and yet a Methodist family has given me the same book in the 1831 edition, together with a *Missouri Harmony* of 1835. By the early 1850's the Presbyterians had discontinued the use of shape notes and were using the 1852 edition of *The Presbyterian Psalmodist*, edited by Thomas Hastings and printed in Philadelphia. This book, though the notes are round, adheres to the old usage of one score for each voice.

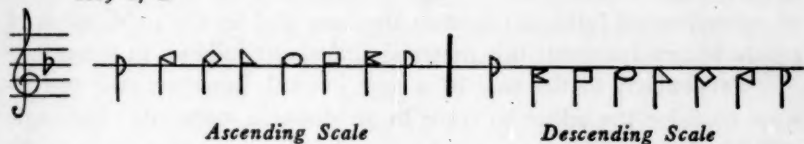
The Ohio Harmonist has shown up in Presbyterian, Lutheran and Baptist families, leading to the conclusion that perhaps all these older books were used in singing schools, as well as in churches. Auld's book must have been very useful in singing schools with its anthems, its hymns with a folk flavor (two in a bagpipe scale), and a large supplement of sixteen temperance songs. In the era of Dr. Dio Lewis and his tavern-smashing followers, such pieces as "So I got drunk again," or "The Drunkard lamenting his wife" were probably quite effective.

Auld published four books, *The Ohio Harmonist* first copyrighted in 1847, and running through different editions up to, and including, 1855; *The Key of the West*, 1856; *The Farmers' and Mechanics' Minstrel*, 1863; *The Golden Trumpet*, no date available. The Ohio Historical Society owns one of the 1863 books, but the other two are rarely seen.

With all of Auld's noble aims, his chief accomplishment seems to have been simplification. The hymns which he took from *The Beauties of Harmony* and *The Missouri Harmony* are all reduced from

four parts to three with the exception of three that used three voices in the first place. This urge for simplification was carried into the realms of absurdity in his "new and cheap plan of writing music" which he sets forth on a page in 1850 edition, inserted after the index. Here he proposes to use his system of notes "which is so perfect in its nature" that it can be made to express the "seven primary sounds" without the usual five lines. The music is to be written on one line only, thus:

Key of B



Ascending Scale

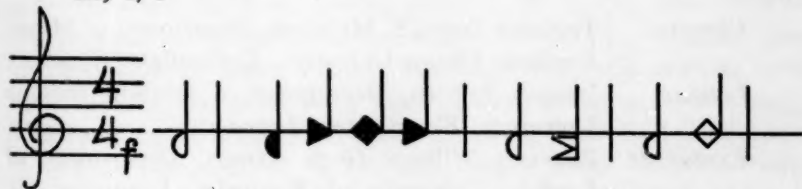
Descending Scale

The old hymn "Uxbridge," which normally would appear in part like this in the melody;



with Auld's new system would be written thus;

Key of F



Mary Hubbell Osburn in *Ohio Composers and Musical Authors* has given good biographical material about Alexander Auld, who, though a Pennsylvanian by birth, must be counted as an Ohioan.

Perrysville, Ohio

Notes, News, and Queries

MIDWEST FOLKLORE is a cooperative enterprise of the regional folklore societies of the Middle West. Published by Indiana University and guided by an advisory committee consisting of Professor Stith Thompson, Dean J. W. Ashton, and Professor George Herzog, the principal function of the journal is to promote an understanding of the folklore and culture of the central portion of the United States. This function can best be served by the publication of collections of folklore found in the area and by the publication of scholarly articles about this material and about folklore in general.

Particularly in the case of a new journal, however, it is not always easy for the editor to come by publishable materials. No single individual, moreover, can ever be completely aware of everyone who is interested in folklore in so large an area as the Middle West. Partly for this reason, but more to stress the cooperative nature of *MIDWEST FOLKLORE*, the regional folklore societies in the Middle West have been asked to appoint editors who will serve in an advisory capacity to the editor and who will make it their business to forward material collected in their own regions to the editor.

Some societies have already appointed or elected their regional editors; others have temporarily appointed a person to serve as regional editor until such time as a regional editor may be elected. At the present moment the list of regional editors with their addresses is as follows:

- Illinois:* Professor David S. McIntosh, Department of Music, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.
- Indiana:* Warren Roberts, Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- Kentucky:* Professor William Hugh Jansen, Department of English, University of Kentucky, Lexington 29, Kentucky.
- Michigan:* Professor Richard Dorson, Department of History, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan.
- Minnesota:* Mrs. Lewis R. Jones, Editor, North Star Folk News, 625 University Avenue, S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Ohio:* Professor Tristram P. Coffin, Department of English, Denison University, Granville, Ohio.
- Wisconsin:* John W. Jenkins, Secretary, Badger State Folklore Society, 816 State Street, Madison 6, Wisconsin.

Notes, News, and Queries continued on page 32.

Folksong Hunters in Missouri

By VANCE RANDOLPH AND RUTH ANN MUSICK

The field of folksong has been pretty well covered in Missouri, at least by comparison with surrounding states. Much of the material is not easily available now, and this paper is a brief record of the work which has been done to date. It seems a good idea to write such an account immediately, while most of the collectors are still alive and known to us personally. Scattered references to old songs doubtless appear in obscure pioneer literature, but the systematic collection of folksong in Missouri, so far as we can find out, began shortly after the turn of the century.

The whole thing was started by H. M. Belden, for many years head of the English department at the University of Missouri. Dr. Belden was collecting folksongs from his students as early as 1903, and in 1906 he founded the Missouri Folklore Society. The Society issued a pamphlet *A Partial List of Song-Ballads and Other Popular Poetry Known in Missouri* (Columbia, Mo., August, 1907, pp. 6) containing fragments of seventy-six ballads, in order to stimulate further collecting. An enlarged and revised version of this booklet (11 pages, 145 items) was published in June, 1910.

Belden's students did a lot of work in the period between 1906 and 1917. The largest collection was made by Miss Goldy Hamilton in Howell, Adair, Gentry and Sullivan counties. Miss Leah Yoffie gathered many children's singing-games in St. Louis. Miss Maude Williams did good work in Clinton county. So did Mr. W. S. Johnson at Tuscumbia, in Miller county. Miss Lois Welty sent in songs from Linn and Holt counties. Miss Ethel Lowry worked in Dade county, Miss Colquitt Newell in St. Francois county, and Mr. Earl Cruikshank in Lewis county. Mr. C. H. Williams, assisted by his brother George, collected some good texts from Bollinger county. Mrs. J. S. Lichtenberg set down both texts and tunes as she heard them in Harrison county. Except for Mrs. Lichtenberg, it appears that these collectors brought in texts only, and made no attempt to record the tunes. Nearly all of their manuscript texts were deposited in the Archive of the Missouri Folklore Society, which was a large cardboard box in Dr. Belden's study.

Out of the material in this box Dr. Belden published the following papers, with examples of Missouri folksong: "The Study of Folksong in America" (*Modern Philology*, II, 105, 573-579); "Ranordine, Rinordine, Rinor" (*JAF* XVIII, 1905, 322); "Old-Country Ballads

in Missouri" (*JAFL* XIX, 1906, 231-240, 281-299); "Old-Country Ballads in Missouri—Geordie" (*JAFL* XX, 1907, 319-320); "Popular Song in Missouri—the Returned Lover" (*Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, CXX, 1908, 62-71); "Three Old Ballads from Missouri" (*JAFL* XXIII, 1910, 429-431); "Balladry in Missouri" (*JAFL* XXV 1912, 1-23); and "Folksong in Missouri—Bedroom Window" (*Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, CXXXVI, 1917, 403-431). To insure the safety of the material, Belden deposited carbon copies of the unpublished Missouri songs in the library at Harvard University. George Lyman Kittredge, professor of English at Harvard, included twenty-six of these pieces in two papers: "Five Old-Country Ballads" (*JAFL* XXV, 1912, 171-177) and "Ballads and Songs" (*JAFL* XXX, 1917, 283-369). These studies by Belden and Kittredge dealt with texts only.

Meanwhile Mrs. L. D. Ames, of Columbia, Mo., published a paper "The Missouri Play-Party" (*JAFL* XXIV, 1911, 295-318) containing thirty-three texts and twenty-nine tunes from Boone and Audrain counties. And Miss Goldy Hamilton, one of Belden's prize students, got out "The Play-Party in Northeast Missouri" (*JAFL* XXVII, 1914, 289-303) with thirty-eight texts from Linn, Monroe, Montgomery, Schuyler, Davis, Adair, Putnam and Macon counties.

It was in 1914, too, that DeWitt Clinton Allen read a paper "Old Ballad Days in Missouri" at a meeting of the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis. He sang fragments of song which he heard as a boy in Clay county in the 1840's and 1850's. It appears that nobody thought much of this paper at the time, but twenty years later, after Colonel Allen's death, somebody dug up the manuscript and published it in the Society's bulletin (*Glimpses of the Past*, St. Louis, Mo., II, November, 1935, 133-150). The printed version gives parts of twenty-two texts, but no music.

The Missouri Folklore Society did practically no collecting after 1917, although it continued to hold meetings until 1920. For a brief account of the Society's rise and fall see Dr. Belden's report (*JAFL* LVI, 1943, 176-177). It was not until 1940 that Belden published his monumental *Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folklore Society* (University of Missouri Studies, Columbia, Mo., XV, 1, 1940, pp. 530). This book contains 284 titles, 610 texts, and 70 tunes. Not every county in Missouri is represented, although the material came from all sections of the state. Belden did not print any play-party songs, since so much of this material had appeared already in the Hamilton and Ames papers mentioned above.

John Robert Moore, instructor at Washington University in St. Louis, published "A Missouri Variant of the False Lover Won Back" (*JAFL* XXXIV, 1921, 395-397) which seems to be the only text of Child 218 ever reported from the United States. A paper by Vance Randolph and Frances Emberson "The Collection of Folk Music in the Ozarks" (*JAFL* LX, 1947, 117) appears to cast some doubt upon the authenticity of this item.

William E. Crissey, in a pamphlet entitled *Warrensburg, Mo., a History with Folk Lore* (Warrensburg, Mo., 1924, 11) printed a text of "William Riley" as sung by the pioneer settlers in Johnson county. Rose Wilder Lane published fragments of twenty-two old Missouri songs in her novels *Hill-Billy* (New York, 1926) and *Cindy* (New York, 1928); she told us that these texts were collected near her home at Mansfield, in Wright county. See also a text of "The Nightingale" in the *Missouri Historical Review* (XXII, April, 1928, 400).

Otto Ernest Rayburn, who now edits the quarterly *Ozark Guide* at Eureka Springs, Arkansas, included many folksong texts in *Ozark Life* (Kingston, Ark., 1925-1930), *Arcadian Magazine* (Eminence, Mo., 1931-32) and *Arcadian Life* (Caddo Gap, Ark., 1933-1941). These were monthly magazines, which Rayburn edited and published himself. The files of all three periodicals, in Rayburn's office, show 112 texts, but several issues of *Ozark Life* are missing. There are scattered folksong references in many articles which Rayburn has contributed to various newspapers (chiefly the *Arkansas Democrat* and the *Arkansas Gazette* of Little Rock, Ark.) since 1930, but most of these are reprinted from the three magazines mentioned above. Rayburn used twenty texts, nine of them play-party songs, in his book *Ozark Country* (New York, 1941). About one-third of all Rayburn's folksong material was obtained from informants in southern Missouri, mostly from Stone, Taney and Shannon counties.

W. H. Strong, a native Ozarker who was for many years employed in the postoffice at Kansas City, wrote a series of articles on folksongs for Rayburn's *Ozark Life*, beginning in July, 1927, and ending in August, 1928. From readers of this magazine he gathered a large pile of manuscript texts, which he intended to publish in book form. Strong died some years ago, and his widow moved to Barnett, in Morgan county. Letters addressed to her remain unanswered, and we have been unable to locate the Strong collection.

Vance Randolph began collecting old songs in McDonald county, in 1920. From February 19, 1927, to May 6, 1927, he conducted a weekly column "The Songs Grandfather Sang" in the *Pineville Democrat*, printing eleven texts, no tunes. He contributed a paper

"The Ozark Play-Party" to *JAF* (XLII, 1929, 201-233) with the words and music of twenty-nine game songs. Next he edited a "Folk-song Department" in Rayburn's *Ozark Life* from December, 1929, to September, 1930, publishing about fifty texts. The following year came Randolph's book *The Ozarks* (New York, 1931) with some forty texts and tunes. Another book, *Ozark Mountain Folks* (New York, 1932) contains the words and music of sixteen songs, mostly Child ballads. More than half of the items listed above were collected in Missouri, largely from McDonald and Barry counties. In 1941-1943 Randolph made phonographic recordings for the Archive of American Folksong, Library of Congress, under the direction of Alan Lomax. About 360 of these records were cut in Greene, Stone and Taney counties. Randolph's four-volume *Ozark Folksongs* (Columbia, Mo., State Historical Society, 1947-1950) contains 1188 texts and 540 tunes from southern Missouri.

Several Missouri newspaper columnists have published folksong texts. The "Hillbilly Heartbeats" page, edited by May Kennedy McCord, ran weekly in the Springfield *Leader-News* (1932-1938) and thrice-weekly in the Springfield *News* (1938-1942). The McCord column contained a great deal of miscellaneous folklore material, with occasional snatches of old ballads and humorous songs. Lucile Morris conducted a weekly feature entitled "The Old Songs" in the Springfield *News and Leader* from August 26, 1934, to March 3, 1935. The files show 102 texts and about twenty scattered verses and fragments; the material was contributed by readers of the column, and published with their names and addresses. C. V. Wheat ran a column called "Songs and Ballads of Yester-Years" in the *Weekly Advertiser* of Aurora, in Lawrence county. It began December 19, 1934, and continued until April 30, 1942, shortly before Mr. Wheat's death. The *Advertiser* file contains a lot of valuable material, and is more important than any of the other newspaper columns that we have seen. Wheat printed 1651 texts altogether, but there was some repetition and duplication.

Charles van Ravenswaay, director of the Missouri Historical Society, collected the texts of some 200 folksongs in the Bonneville and Fayette area of central Missouri, about 1935. This collection has not been published, but the manuscript is filed in the Jefferson Memorial Building at St. Louis.

Margaret Owen and Mrs. Hartley G. Banks, of Columbia, Missouri, have a manuscript collection of twenty ballad texts from their father, Walter E. Owen, who was born in 1861 and lived in Henry county. He learned most of the songs from his father, B. L.

Owen, who came from North Carolina and settled near Lexington, Missouri, about 1820. The Owen manuscript is kept in Mrs. Banks' home in Columbia.

Another local collection is that of Manerva Carolyn Shepherd, who lives at Osceola, in St. Clair county. Mrs. Shepherd's father, who came to Missouri from Tennessee in the 1860's, was a fiddler and ballad-singer. Manerva Carolyn learned many of his songs. She has manuscript copies of about fifty texts and knows all the tunes by heart, but they have not been recorded phonographically.

Luther Parker, now of Santa Cruz, California, has written down the words of twenty-five old songs which he learned from his mother, Mary Ellen Rees Parker, about 1889. Mr. Parker was born in Madison county, in 1872; his parents were both native Missourians, and there were many ballad-singers in the family. Parker knows the tunes of his twenty-five pieces, but when we last heard from him (July 7, 1946) he had been unable to get the music transcribed satisfactorily.

Geraldine B. Parker of St. Louis, working with the CWS recreational division and later as head of the WPA Writers' Project, in 1933-1937, did much to stimulate the collection of folksongs in Missouri. Most of Mrs. Parker's people wrote down texts only, but Lloyd Schupbach recorded some tunes in Christian county, mostly from singers located by Ruth Day of Sparta. Another of Mrs. Parker's assistants, Emma Galbraith of Springfield, collected 208 songs in Greene county; she transcribed the tunes herself, with some help from other local musicians. Miss Galbraith told us in 1946 that she had a complete manuscript copy of this collection at her home in Springfield. All folklore material collected by the CWS, FSA, WPA and other government agencies was typed and deposited in the Library of Congress. It was understood at the time that each state retained a carbon of everything collected, but we have been unable to locate such files in Missouri. The state guidebook *Missouri, a Guide to the "Show Me" State* (New York, 1941) was compiled by the WPA and copyrighted by the Missouri State Highway Department, but it contains only partial texts of five songs and no tunes at all.

The National Folk Festival Association, founded and directed by Sarah Gertrude Knott, is associated in the public mind with large cities, because its annual Festivals are held in Chicago, Dallas, Cleveland, Washington and Philadelphia. But Miss Knott started the whole thing in the Ozarks (*Reader's Digest*, May, 1939, 40) and staged preliminary festivals in Aurora, West Plains, Rolla, Joplin, and Springfield during March and April, 1934. Miss Knott tells us that

the Missouri festivals were produced in collaboration with Geraldine B. Parker, who was assisted by May Kennedy McCord and other local enthusiasts. Missouri was well represented at the First National Folk Festival, held in St. Louis, April 30—May 5, 1934. Miss Knott told reporters that she had arranged to have the best songs and fiddle-tunes recorded phonographically. But whether this was done, or what became of the recordings, we have been unable to learn.

After Miss Knott's national organization had shown the way, the whole region was quite enthusiastic about folk festivals for awhile. Geraldine B. Parker directed a four-day "Ozark Festival" at Rolla, in June, 1937. There were many smaller folklore gatherings, with good singers and fiddlers and banjo-pickers at every one of them. But so far as we can learn, nobody made any attempt to record the music, or even to write down the words of the songs.

In December, 1936, Sidney Robertson came to Missouri, recording folk music for the Special Skills Division of the Farm Security Administration. It has been said that Mrs. Robertson was the first person to use a phonographic recording machine in the collection of Missouri folksongs. She made splendid recordings of about 125 pieces, mostly in St. Louis and Springfield and Willow Springs. The *Gold Rush Song Book* compiled by Leanora Black and Sidney Robertson (San Francisco, Cal., 1940, 22) features a "Joe Bowers" tune which Mrs. Robertson obtained from Ben Strong near Cassville, in Barry county. In May, 1937, at the Fourth National Folk Festival in Chicago, she made many more records from the singing of Missourians who appeared at the Festival. Chief among these was Cinderella Kinnaird, who lived near Willow Springs in Howell county. According to the *Library of Congress Check-List* (Washington, D.C., 1942) Charles Seeger and Sidney Robertson recorded several more items, sung by a Missourian who visited Washington in 1937. All of Mrs. Robertson's recordings are now filed in the Library of Congress.

Paul Holland, head of a printing company in Springfield, knew many old songs, some of which he consistently refused to have recorded by the folksong hunters. In carefully chosen company, back in 1934, Mr. Holland sang a highly prized "family ballad" (Child 250) which he called "Andrew Bardeen" and believed to be virtually unknown outside the Holland clan. He would not allow collectors to write down either the words or the tune of this piece. Mr. Holland said in 1939 that he was preparing a large collection of folksongs for publication, but we failed to find anybody who has ever seen his manuscript.

Another famous Greene county singer was Ben Rice, who ran a little grocery store in Springfield for many years, and had a large repertory of old songs. His son David at one time considered publishing a book of these ballads. Both Ben and David Rice attended several of the National Folk Festivals, and allowed Sidney Robertson to record some of their best pieces for the Library of Congress. It is said that David Rice, in 1936 or 1937, had a sizeable manuscript collection, with tunes written out by himself and pasted into the text. But we have not seen the Rice manuscript, and have been unable to get any definite information about it.

The only important paper about Missouri songs to be published in 1936 was Francis M. Barbour's "Some Fusions in Missouri Ballads" (*JAF* XLIX, 1936, 207-214).

Lynn E. Hummel, a teacher of music in the public schools of Monett, Missouri, wrote a master's thesis on *Ozark Folksongs* for the music department of the University of Missouri in 1936. He gives the words and music of 116 songs. Hummel's interest was in tunes rather than texts. This thesis has not been printed, but there is a typescript in the University library at Columbia.

Neither John A. Lomax nor Alan Lomax ever did any collecting in Missouri, so far as we know. But it appears (*Library of Congress Check-List*, Washington, D.C., 1942) that Alan Lomax recorded a few pieces from a Kansas City singer who came to New York in 1938.

Edwin Ford Piper, of the University of Iowa, had a large file of Missouri folksongs in manuscript, collected over a term of years. Many phonographic recordings, including some Missouri items, were made by Piper and his students. It is said that Mrs. Piper destroyed part of the collection after the Professor's death in May, 1939, and that the rest of it was turned over to the University library in Iowa City. A careful search of the University archives in 1950 failed to turn up any of Piper's material, however. It may be that some of the Piper items were lost when East Hall burned in 1946. Dr. Ernest Horn, who worked with Piper for some years, has ninety-six texts and tunes from Piper's collection, but only nine of them were collected in Missouri. Dr. Horn is a Missourian, and his own collection contains many Missouri pieces, but it is not ready for publication.

Grant McDonald submitted a master's thesis entitled *A Study of Selected Folk-Songs of Southern Missouri* to the music department of the University of Iowa in August, 1939. This has not been published, but a 100-page typescript is filed in the University library at Iowa City. It comprises thirty-eight texts and thirty-seven tunes, collected in Greene, Christian, Stone, and Taney counties. McDonald

did not use a recording machine but set down the tunes directly. The name and address of the singer is attached to each item, but the dates of collection are not given. It seems clear, however, that McDonald's work began in the spring of 1937 and continued through 1938, while he was a teacher of music in the high school at Spokane, in Christian county.

William A. Owens came to Greene county in the summer of 1939, and May Kennedy McCord sang fifteen old ballads into his recorder. There is a reference to this in Mrs. McCord's column in the *Springfield News* (June 8, 1939). It is said that he collected other folksongs in Webster and Wright counties. Professor Owens' doctoral dissertation, accepted by the University of Iowa in 1941, was entitled *Texas Folk Songs*, but we do not know what became of the recordings he made in Missouri.

Ira W. Ford's *Traditional Music of America* (New York, 1940) is primarily a collection of fiddle-tunes, with few genuine folksongs. The book lacks any sort of documentation, and it is hard to tell when or where the items were collected. But we know that Ford lived in Missouri for some years, and he wrote us from Los Angeles (May 1, 1946) that eleven of his tunes "are indigenous of the Missouri Ozark region." We believe that most of the Missouri pieces in *Traditional Music* came from Grundy and Taney counties.

Ruth Ann Musick, in 1939, made phonographic recordings of thirty Missouri songs for Professor Piper at the University of Iowa. These were later transcribed but have never been published. Dr. Musick has a manuscript collection of 354 texts and 117 tunes gathered in various parts of Missouri. Three of these texts appeared in her paper "Three Folksongs from Missouri" (*Hoosier Folklore*, V, March, 1946, 29-34). Since June, 1948, Dr. Musick has conducted a weekly column "The Old Folks Say" in the *Times-West Virginian*, Fairmount, West Virginia, in which the texts of seventeen Missouri songs have appeared.

Dr. Leah Rachel Clara Yoffie, instructor in English at Washington University, published a paper "Three Generations of Children's Singing Games in St. Louis" (*JAFI* LX, 1947, 1-51), with the texts of 47 game-songs collected in 1900, 31 collected in 1914, and 48 collected in 1944. This paper considers 71 different singing games, but no tunes. Dr. Yoffie has also a manuscript collection of English ballads and folksongs gathered in St. Louis, which she is now preparing for publication.

Paul G. Brewster, who was teaching English at the University of Missouri in 1938-1941, is another specialist in games and game-

songs. Mr. Brewster writes us (Nov. 12, 1949) that he is preparing for publication a large collection of games from the Middle West, including many items collected from his students in Missouri.

A few years ago many progressive Missourians, particularly in the southern part of the state, seemed rather ashamed of the old songs. Some of these citizens thought that ballad-hunters and other folklorists were "glorifying the backwoods" in such a manner as to minimize the advantages of modern industry and agriculture. As recently as April, 1934, the Springfield Chamber of Commerce raised a great outcry over Sarah Gertrude Knott's preparations for her National Folk Festival. Many newspapers in the smaller cities reflected this point of view. But recently there seems to be a more enlightened public opinion. Books on folklore are reviewed without heat in Missouri newspapers, and the conservative State Historical Society now looks with favor upon folksong collectors; see Dr. Philip D. Jordan's paper "History and Folklore" in the *Missouri Historical Review* (XLIV, January, 1950, 119-129). Professor H. M. Belden, who initiated the study of folksong in Missouri, has retired from active duty. But even without Dr. Belden's leadership, it is to be hoped that the Missouri Folklore Society which he founded nearly fifty years ago, will sometime be re-established at the University of Missouri.

Fairmount State College

Eureka Springs, Arkansas
Fairmount, West Virginia

Notes, News, and Queries continued from page 22.

Other states and other regional folklore societies are invited to participate and to elect or appoint regional editors.

Participation in the publication of *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* is of financial as well as of scientific value. The subscription price to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* is three dollars to libraries, schools, and individuals; members of participating regional folklore societies may obtain the journal for \$2.50, however, if they subscribe through their own societies. Members of such societies who wish to subscribe to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* should send the money for their subscription to the treasurer of their society along with their dues for the year. The treasurer will then send the money for their subscriptions on to the business manager of *MIDWEST FOLKLORE*, Dr. Jonas Balys, Library, Room 41, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Libraries, schools, and non-members of regional folklore societies should send their subscriptions directly to the business manager.

Materials for publication should be sent to the appropriate regional editor. The regional editor will either read the material or ask a person whom he feels to be a competent authority in the field of the manuscript to read the material. If it is found to be acceptable, the regional editor will then ship it on to the editor who will notify the author of its acceptance and its probable date of publication. Material sent directly to the editor will be submitted to a competent authority for reading before its acceptance. Since *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* will appear in March, June, September, and December, the deadline for each issue will be 15th of the second month preceding each issue; e.g., the deadline for Volume I, No. 2, June, 1951, will be April 15, 1951, etc.

MIDWEST FOLKLORE is participating with a large group of the learned journals published in the United States in an attempt to standardize manuscript and publication style. The style sheet finally agreed upon will be published in the April, 1951, issue of *PMJA*, and offprints of this style sheet will be available from the business manager some time shortly after this date. Until the style sheets are available, however, we would like to point out that manuscripts for publication should be typed, double-spaced on 8½ x 11 paper; footnotes should be typed double-spaced with a triple space between each note at the end of the article. The first sheet of the manuscript should contain the title, and immediately under it the author's name preceded by the word *By*. Immediately following the article the

Notes, News, and Queries continued on page 39.

Lore of the Finnish-American Sauna

By AILI K. JOHNSON

The *sauna*, the hot-air bath of the Finns, was first brought to America in 1638, by Finnish immigrants from Sweden to the region of the Delaware River. The Finnish historian, S. Ilmonen, states in his account of these immigrants¹ that their earliest colonial map shows a place name, *Sauno*, where Philadelphia was to be founded by William Penn forty three years later.

No trace of these early *saunas* seems to appear in subsequent American history or folklore, for although Robert Beverly, in 1705, in *The History and Present State of Virginia*,² indicates a similarity between the sweat house of the American Indian and that of the Finns and Muscovites in Europe, he makes no reference to the *sauna* in America.

It was not until the 1860's that succeeding waves of immigration from Finland again brought to this country the *sauna*, with its ancient heritage of shamanism already modified by the Lutheran church. Further changes were to take place to conform with the folkways and mores of the neighboring "toiskieliset" ("Other-tongued ones"), such as the building of a dressing room adjacent to the *sauna*, the construction of a chimney for the hearth, to conform with safety regulations and insurance company requisites.

The *sauna* still exists, however, as a folk cultural institution wherever Finnish Americans live, retaining its most important traditions and tabus in rural areas. The commercial steam bath of the cities, sometimes accepted as a substitute for the hot-air bath, is not regarded as a "truly Finnish" *sauna* by even the younger Finns.

To understand the uses of the *sauna*, a brief description is necessary. The immigrant farmer frequently builds his *sauna* of cedar or pine logs before he builds his house. The bathchamber is usually square with a square fieldstone hearth in one corner and a three-tiered wooden platform extending from wall to wall at one end of the chamber. These, and the bathwhisks of leafy boughs, are the requisites of all Finnish baths, ancient or modern.

The earlier type of *sauna*, the *savu-sauna*, or smoke-*sauna*, is still found in some rural areas and is generally preferred by the older Finns. It differs from the modern farm *sauna* in that it has no chim-

¹ *Delawaren Suomalaiset*, S. Ilmonen. Karisto, O Y, n.d. Pp. 104-105.

² *History and Present State of Virginia*, 1705, Robert Beverley. Pp. 218-219.

ney. The fireplace, about four feet square, is built of field stone without the use of bricks or mortar, and the fragrant smoke from the wood fire encircles the log walls, the triple-tiered platform, the beams of ti. low ceiling, and escapes from a small vent near the ceiling.

Grandfathers will tell you that only this ancient type, the smoke-sauna, is a Finnish *sauna*. It is built without a chimney because smoke is pure and cleansing; its fragrance is healing. No bricks or mortar can be used, because these give off unwholesome steam which prevents the *sauna* from becoming hot enough³ to dry the perspiration of the bather as it forms. A steam bath is weakening, but a hot air bath, with a rinse in pure water, gives one strength. There must be no iron in the fireplace, or on the wooden tubs for water, or elsewhere in the *sauna*, for iron rusts, and rust is poison.⁴ The bathwhisks must be made with care, of cedar,⁵ a "living" tree that remains green throughout the winter. John Erkintalo,⁶ however, finds that ironwood is a tree of hardness and strength, so he prefers ironwood boughs instead of cedar, or the traditional birch of Finland.

The modern *sauna*, despite the chimney, bricks, mortar, and iron, retains, however, some of the ancient traditions of the smoke-sauna. No child is permitted to play in the bath-chamber, no cat or dog allowed to enter. No dead are brought to lie here, for the odor of death, "kalman haiju," is an evil odor. No menial, defiling tasks are permitted in the *sauna*, such as the smoking of meats, boiling of wash waters, or cooking of foods lest they spoil the *sauna* with their alien smells. Many Finns never enter the bath-chamber wearing shoes, even to build the fire, but keep a pair of house slippers for this purpose in the adjacent dressing room.

One old country use of the *sauna* seems profane to the American Finn: that of the top bathing platform for the heating of barley into malt. This board was called the *mallas-lauta*, the malt-board. My father explained to me that the older folks considered the making of ale no sacrilegious task, for the ripening grains had the "element of life." This traditional use of the *sauna* was ridiculed by the Temperance Society American Finn of the early twentieth century in the jeering name given to the dance halls adjoining the old-fashioned saloons. They were called *mallas-saunat*, malt-saunas, and the term expressed disapproval of ale-making as well as the beerhall of America.

The old smoke-sauna had three important uses: it was the sanc-

³ 170 to 230 degrees Fahrenheit.

⁴ Informant: Henry Hankila, Mass, Michigan.

⁵ The traditional birch boughs are sometimes used; the cedar is more common.

⁶ Immigrant, Forest Lake, Michigan.

tuary devoted to ritual cleansing, healing, and birth. The modern *sauna* is used for cleansing and healing; its dressing room may sometimes be used as a craft shop for "clean" tasks, like the weaving of rugs, the making of birch bark shoes, or woodcarving.

The Sabbath of the older Finns begins on Saturday, at sundown, with the ritual cleansing. Even a third generation American Finn will say, after his bath, "I feel clean inside and out; all the week's evil is washed out of my system," or, "Now I am clean enough to go to God's house."⁷ Another clue to the importance of cleansing in its relation to religion lies in the tabu against swearing or becoming angry in the *sauna*.

Many of the social aspects of the *sauna* have been retained. It is still the custom to invite guests to bathe in your *sauna* on Saturday night. They bring with them their own towels and often a cake or coffee bread for the after-*sauna* coffee party.

Men and boys⁸ go to the *sauna* first, while it is at its hottest. The young men vie with one another to see who can lie on the top platform the longest, who can roll in the snow the greatest number of times, or who can reach the lake or creek first for a cooling rinse. He who succeeds is, of course, the "strongest."

Women and children bathe next. The children are given instruction in the ritual of cleansing, encouraged to stay in the bath a long time, and to sit on the top platform where the heat is greatest, in order that they may become strong and hardy. Sometimes a nonsense rhyme is chanted as a mother pours rinsing water on her child's back. "Resputa, resputa, resputa, respun, respun, respun," she sings.

Occasionally a crying child is admonished with an old nursery song:⁹

Piis, piis, pikkusta lasta,
Mikä sille lapselle tuli?
Vai liekkö tuon pappaa säikkytänyt
Saunan savisella tiellä?

Hush, hush, little child,
What has come upon him?
Has his papa frightened him
On the clay path to the sauna?

The young women among the guests and family are the last to bathe.

When guests are not present, the family of mother, father, and

⁷ Many rural Finnish communities hold dances on Sunday night, for the Sabbath has ended at sundown on Sunday. It is considered wicked to dance on Saturday night, even in non-religious groups. The Lutheran Church frowns upon dancing at any time.

⁸ American Finns never follow the ancient custom of having a woman attendant in the bath, nor that of having both sexes of different families bathe together (except with young children).

⁹ Sung to traditional Finnish tune *Velin Surmaaja* (version: Child ballad No. 13).

young children bathe together. As a result of this custom of cleansing, the Finnish child grows to adulthood with no feeling of shame or curiosity about the human body. Sex is never synonymous with nakedness in his mind.¹⁰

The *sauna* is still used in healing by the immigrant healer. Rarely does he use magic properties, such as graveyard mold, sweat from a stone, or excrement. He may chant a charm or two, but massage alone is usually considered sufficient, since he is believed to have a "divine gift." A Finnish proverb states that illness is brought by God. "Ei tauti tartu eikä rutto rupea ilman tahotta Jumalan." ("No illness clings, no plague begins, without the will of God.") Likewise, God is the great healer. Old Eli, an Upper Peninsula masseur answers, when asked if he "says a prayer or two" (i.e. chants a charm), "My prayers are my own; God is the healer. I am only the go-between."

The *sauna* is now not completely necessary for healing, for Herman Maki,¹¹ in speaking of the seer and prophet, John Bjorklund, tells the following anecdote:

"John Bjorklund had just come in from the *sauna* to the lumber kitchen when he saw Jack Kivisto groaning with a toothache. He laughed and said, 'Are there still foolish Finns who suffer toothache? I am weak from the steam¹² of the *sauna*, but I shall try to cure you!' He stood behind Kivisto, took the man's chin in his hands and massaged it. 'Now bite your teeth together,' Bjorklund said at last, and at once Jack's toothache was gone.

"Many years later, Jack would tell the men down in the mines when they complained of toothache, 'Why don't you get your toothache cured forever, as I did mine?'"

The masseur is still a recognized healer, regarded with respect by old and young alike. Not so with the cupper, the bleeder, for innumerable anecdotes are told by younger Finns about anemia and death resulting from this practice. Older folks, under seventy-five years of age, however, are often convinced that they should be bled twice a year, spring and fall, to relieve them of "bad blood" causing rheumatism or high blood pressure.

The cupper, like the masseur, officiates in a warm *sauna*. His (or her) tools are simple: cows' horns, well scraped and cleaned, and a sharp instrument to prick the skin. The modern cupper uses horns of glass, designed to simulate animal horns, and an instrument which makes innumerable tiny punctures in the skin at one swift stroke.

¹⁰ Lauri Lahti, Flint, Michigan. Aged 38, second generation.

¹¹ Immigrant story teller, Palmer, Michigan. Told to R. M. Dorson.

¹² The implication of the remark is that this was a modern *sauna*.

The charge to the patient is usually five cents a horn, and as many as forty horns are required for an acute illness. Formerly blood-stopping charms and healing charms were known by the cupper.

The third important use of the *sauna* has almost disappeared in America, along with the midwife whose function it was to heat the *sauna*, to prepare the waters, and, long ago, to say a charm to bring an easy birth, or to stop the blood from flowing. Old grandmothers tell many anecdotes of birth in the *sauna*, of the strength of the mother, her joy at carrying the baby back to the *tupa* in her arms, her readiness to assume her household tasks within a few hours after birth.

The frequent and casual mention of the *sauna* in traditional folktale and folksong reflects these principal uses of the *sauna*, as a place for cleansing, healing, and birth.

The following tale of Herman Maki, of Palmer, Michigan, expresses the faith of the Finn in his *sauna*.

*The Sauna*¹³

They say that the *sauna* was at one time a holy place, where one had to be careful how one spoke. Even in my time men do not swear in the *sauna*.

There is a good story about the powers of the *sauna*. It shows that even the Russians knew about the Finnish *sauna*.

Three Russian peddlers were crossing a lake on the ice. They carried heavy knapsacks, filled with woollen shawls, and other such things. They came to the other shore, where there was a large opening in the ice, from which water was carried for cattle by horses and sleighs.

As nightfall was approaching, the men did not see the hole in the ice, and the man in the middle fell in, knapsack and all. The others paid no heed, but went on to the nearest house by the lake, and asked for a lodging for the night. As Russian peddlers are known to pay well, they were allowed to stay.

They arose the next morning and asked, "Will the good wife heat the *sauna*? Make it hotter than usual."

The housewife, knowing they would pay well, heated the *sauna* as hot as she could.

Then the Russians took woollen blankets, and a couple of log-grappling hooks from their knapsacks, and went out to the lake where they fished out their comrade who had drowned the night before. They wrapped him in blankets, and carried him to the *sauna*.

¹³ Told to R. M. Dorson and A. K. Johnson, September 4, 1946.

They remained in the *sauna* for four hours. Three men walked out and continued on their journey.

There is a Finnish proverb, "Jos ei terva, suola, ja sauna, paranna, kuolema ottaa." "If tar, salt,¹⁴ and the *sauna* cannot cure you, death will take you." It is quite true, you know.

The following anecdote is the only off-color joke the writer has encountered, pertaining to sex and *sauna*: The *trenki* (hired man), the old master, and the young wife were bathing in the *sauna*. The young wife suddenly cried 'out, "More soap for the old man's eyes."

At one time the Cornish neighbors of Finns regarded the *sauna* with horror as a dangerous, heathen custom. Old Finnish miners still tell stories about the sheriff in Bessemer who "hung around the Finnish boarding house on Saturday night, ready to arrest a man if he stepped out of the house in his bare feet."

The attitude of the "Kosen-jäkki"¹⁵ has changed, for he will now tell you, with genial humor, that he has a fine *sauna* at his camp. "And why not?" he asks. "Didn't the Finns steal our pasties and call them Finnish pasties? Why can't a good U.P. Cousin Jack have a genuine Cousin Jack *sauna*?"

The following anecdote, current in the Upper Peninsula, became popular in the army during World War II. In the earlier versions, collected in the Upper Peninsula before the war, the leading characters were Finnish and English missionaries in the south sea islands. The army version makes them three American soldiers from the Upper Peninsula, in the South Pacific area. The boys, one of whom is called Urho, are captured by natives, hostile cannibals. They are placed in a huge cauldron to boil, covered with a heavy lid. After four hours of cooking, Urho, the Finnish boy, knocks on the lid. The surprised native chief removes the cover from the cauldron, and out pops Urho's red face. He waves his arm and shouts, "W'at blace da dowel? Dis iss da pest *sauna* I haf had since I leave da Is'peming."¹⁶ This anecdote is one of the many popular Finnish dialect stories of the Upper Peninsula, first told by the "outsider," now enjoyed by the Finnish American himself.

¹⁴ Maki uses the Americanized "temperance" version of the old proverb, substituting "salt" for the word "spirits." Salt is also considered a strengthening substance, used internally and externally.

¹⁵ "Cousin Jack," one of English background.

¹⁶ There were five versions; two were pre-war, the earliest told by a Swede, the other by a Finn. Of the three post-war versions, one came from a second-generation Cornish American, and two from Finnish Americans, second generation.

To the Finn, however, there is really very little humor in his concepts of the *sauna*. The structure of the old *sauna* has changed, superstitions are forgotten, magic charms have almost died out, but the ancient belief still lives in the heart of every Finnish American; his *sauna* is the antithesis of all evil, death and decay; it is a symbol of life, strength, healing, and goodness. "The *sauna* brings you a little nearer to God."¹⁷

Utica, Michigan

¹⁷ The same thought has been expressed to me by many older people, some a little apologetically through fear that they might be thought superstitious.

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author's school affiliation, if any, should be typed at the left of the page and his city of residence at the right of the page. Attention to these details will greatly facilitate the editor's work.

Finally, may we point out that offprints of articles will be available to their authors at cost. It is, of course, impossible to estimate the cost of offprints until the material has been set in type and the number of pages has been seen, but authors who wish offprints for personal distribution should notify the editor when submitting their manuscripts and he will let them know the approximate cost as soon as the material reaches page-proof stage.

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Notes, News, and Queries continued from page 39.

Survey of Materials in Folk and Primitive Music. The survey of materials in folk and primitive music which appeared in 1936 as "Research in Primitive and Folk Music in the United States," by Dr. George Herzog, is now being revised for reissue by the American Council of Learned Societies. A questionnaire has recently been mailed to a number of institutions and individuals who are apt to have pertinent collections (sound recordings or transcriptions by ear of folk or primitive music; data on publication of such records; photographs or films illustrating folk or primitive singing; musical instruments or dancing; collections of musical instruments).

Readers of this journal who have such materials and who have not received the questionnaire are urged to report their holdings for inclusion in the revised edition. Information concerned primarily or entirely with primitive music should be sent to Dr. George Herzog, Department of Anthropology, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Requests for questionnaires and correspondence concerning folk music materials should be directed to Mrs. Herbert Halpert, 1607 Farmer Avenue, Murray, Kentucky, who is assisting Dr. Herzog in the revision of the survey.

University Folklore Courses. This fall a one semester course in "Folklore and American Culture" was added to the English curriculum at Denison University. The course is an introduction to the forms of folk material and it attempts to relate folklore to other fields, particularly English and American literature.

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A Pattern of Proverbial Exaggeration From West Kentucky

By HERBERT HALPERT

Several scholars have pointed out that certain rhetorical patterns of humorous exaggeration are an integral part of tall tale humor as well as of the humor of comment on human behavior and appearance.¹ From a large collection of proverbs and proverbial sayings contributed by students of Murray State College,² I have chosen the group with the pattern *so . . . that*, a pattern which seems very productive of exaggerated humor of the tall tale variety.

Parallels to a few of these sayings can be found in British proverb collections; others are obviously of recent coinage. Although sayings of this sort flourished in early nineteenth century newspapers and in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century joke books, I believe more American parallels to these Kentucky items can be found in collections from oral sources than in those from print. The type seems well distributed in oral tradition from New England and New York to the Southwest, and it is also prominent in the jesting tall tales secured from Southern Negroes.³

More than two-thirds of these sayings were reported from the Jackson Purchase: the eight Kentucky counties west of the Tennessee River. A few came from counties immediately to the east and northeast. For all other items, including half a dozen from East Kentucky, seventeen from West Tennessee, and nine from other states,

¹ See especially the discussion by Boatright, Botkin, and Loomis in the references listed below.

² Of the many students who contributed these sayings, the following furnished more than half of the items: Mabel Cissell, Thomas Herndon, Virginia Jo Hurdle, Juanita Jones, Mrs. Lillian Lowry, Herman McLean, Julia May, Mrs. Alma Pentecost, L. W. Siler, Charles Speed, Nancy L. Taylor, Mrs. Dorothy Asher Waugh.

³ See: Harold W. Thompson, *Body, Boots & Britches* (Philadelphia, 1940), pp. 494-496, 499; B. A. Botkin, *A Treasury of American Folklore* (New York, 1944), pp. 329-333, 352-353, 465-468, 476-477, 487, 594-595, 600-601, 606-607 (A number of Dr. Botkin's quotations are from Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* and Carl Sandburg, *The People, Yes*. Both books have other examples in the same patterns); "Question and Answer Tall Tales of Negro School Children," in J. Mason Brewer, *Humorous Folk Tales of the South Carolina Negro* (Orangeburg, S.C., 1945), pp. 27-30; B. A. Botkin, *A Treasury of New England Folklore* (New York, 1947), pp. 806, 809, 814-822; Ernest Cox, "Rustic Imagery in Mississippi Proverbs," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, Vol. 11 (1947), 263-267; C. Grant Loomis, "Jonathanisms: American Epigrammatic Hyperbole," *Western Folklore*, VI (1947), 211-227; Mody C. Boatright, *Folk Laughter on the American Frontier* (New York, 1949), pp. 156-157.

the regional source has been given in parentheses after the saying. I have omitted, though with regret, a few vivid items that might be offensive to some readers.

1. The room's so bare, there isn't a peg to hang a thought on.
2. She is so bowlegged that a sailor could dive between her knees.
3. So bowlegged you could roll a barrel through his legs.
4. She's so bowlegged she couldn't stop a greased pig in an alley.
- ✓ 5. So bright his mother calls him son.
6. You're so bright they have to turn out the lights when you come in the room.
7. He's so bright you have to put him under a tub.
8. So cheap he'd steal a penny off a dead man's eyes. (W. Tenn.)
9. So cold the blaze froze in the lamp chimney.
10. My feet are so cold I am walking from memory.
11. It is so cold it would freeze the balls off a brass monkey.
12. So cold that it will freeze the balls off of a pool table.
13. So cold you have to milk the cows with wire pliers.
14. So crooked he'd fit in a barrel.
15. He's so crooked that he can't lie straight in bed. (Outagamie Co., Wis.)
16. He's so crooked he has to put his hat on with a corkscrew. (Cumberland Co., Maine)
17. So crooked he has to screw his socks on.
18. He was so crooked that they had to screw him into the ground to bury him when he died. (Jefferson Co., Ala.)
19. He is so crooked that instead of coming he went.
20. So crooked you wear out your horn blowing at your own tail light.
- ✓ 21. So cross-eyed that when he cried the tears ran down his back.
22. So dark that you could cut it with a knife. (W. Tenn.)
23. This place is so dead that it would make a morgue look like a merry-go-round.
24. So deaf he can't hear (it) thunder.
25. The snow was so deep I had to stand up to ~~st~~^{HIT}.....
26. I'm so disgusted I could chew nails.
27. So drunk he couldn't hit the ground with his hat.
28. So dry he's spittin' cotton.
29. So dull it won't cut (hot) butter.
30. I'm so embarrassed I could dig a hole for a grave and jump in.
31. I'm so embarrassed I could fall through the floor.
32. My stomach is so empty that it thinks my throat is cut.
33. My stomach is so empty I think it's married to my backbone.

34. I'll knock you so far the jaybirds will build in your pockets before you get back.
35. He lives so far back in the hills that a ground hog has to carry the mail.
36. He lives so far back in the hills that he has to lay flat on his back at noon time to see the sun.
37. He lives so far back in the hills they have to pump daylight so he can see.
38. He lives so far back in the hills, they have to wipe the owl ~~shit~~ off of the clock to see what time it is.
39. So far behind he thinks he's in front.
40. I'll be so far under the cover, you'll have to shoot my breakfast to me with a slingshot. (W. Tenn.)
41. We were going so fast that the telephone poles looked like a picket fence. (W. Tenn.)
42. He was going so fast that grey squirrels were being sucked through the radiator. (W. Tenn.)
43. I'm so full I'm 'bout to pop.
44. He is so full of himself that he is quite empty.
45. So good sugar wouldn't melt in her mouth.
46. So green he has to carry corn in his pocket.
47. You're so green the cows will eat you if you don't watch out.
48. So happy I could stand on my head and stack bb's.
49. So hard you can't scratch it.
50. I will hit you so hard it will jar your ancestors in hell.
51. I'll hit you so hard your tongue will be in your shoes. (Used by children)
52. I'll slap you so hard your ears will ring like bells.
53. She has got her nose so high in the air, if it rained she would drown.
54. Sun's so hot it could fry an egg.
55. So hungry I could eat cold catfish and honey.
56. I'm so hungry I could eat a horse. (W. Ky.; also Dunklin Co., Mo.)
57. I'm so hungry that I could eat the south end of a north bound jackass. (W. Ky.; variant from Maine: "skunk")
58. I'm so hungry I could eat the kitchen, cook stove, tomcat and all. ("from a play")
59. I'm so hungry I could eat the ass of a skunk and never hold my nose.
60. I'm so hungry I could eat a sow and ten (little) pigs.

61. I'm so hungry that I could eat a sow and seven pigs and chase the boar over a ten-acre field.
62. I'm so hungry it feels as if my back is growed to my stomach.
63. I'm so hungry my stomach has grown to my backbone.
64. So hungry your stomach touches your backbone.
65. I'm so hungry my stomach thinks my throat is cut.
66. He kept a nickel so long when he finally spent it the buffalo had to get off and stretch. (W. Tenn.)
67. Her tongue is so long she c'n stand in the parlor 'n' lick the skillet in the kitchen. (Said of a gossip woman)
68. So low he chins himself on the curb. (Corbin, Ky.)
69. So low he can count a caterpillar's third segment. (Monroe Co., Miss.)
70. So low that I could crawl through a crack in the floor. (Saline Co., Ill.)
71. So low he could crawl under a rug and never be noticed. (W. Tenn.)
72. So low you have to look up to see the top of the ground.
73. So low he has to reach up to touch bottom.
74. So low he has to tiptoe to reach the bottom.
75. So low he could ride horseback under a snake's belly.
76. So low you can sit on a toothpick and swing your feet. (W. Ky.; also Guymon, Okla.)
77. So low he couldn't step over a toothpick on stilts.
78. So low he would have to stand on tiptoe to scratch a snake's belly.
79. So low he could walk under the belly of a snake. (Corbin, Ky.)
80. So low he could walk under a snake's belly with a top hat on. (Known since 1879)
81. So low you could walk under a snake with a top hat on your head.
82. I'm so low my pockets are dipping sand. (W. Tenn.)
83. So low a snake's ass seems like the farthest star in the heavens. (La Porte, Ind.)
84. So low down that you have to climb up on a stepladder to see whether a dime is head or tails. (W. Tenn.)
85. He's so low down he could sit on a piece of paper and his feet would hang over the edge.
86. So lucky he must carry horseshoes in each pocket. (Corbin, Ky.)
87. I'm so mad I could bite a ten-penny nail in two.
88. They were so mad they couldn't see straight.

89. She's so mad you could walk from here to town on her lower lip.
90. So mean he pushes little chicks in the creek. (Corbin, Ky.)
91. So mean he wouldn't spit on you if your guts were on fire. (W. Tenn.)
92. She's so nosey she can hear the grass grow. (W. Tenn.)
93. That woman is so nosey that you can go to your room, pull down the shades, turn out the lights and sneeze, and the next day she'll ask you how your cold is.
94. It's so old it came out of Noah's ark on crutches. (W. Tenn.)
95. So pore he cain't buy a sick nigger's supper.
96. He is so poor that when he buttons his coat he is locking his trunk. (W. Tenn.)
97. Land so poor that fertilizer must be placed around the house to get the clock to run.
98. So quiet you could hear a pin drop.
99. Your eyes are so red that they look like two p^lss... holes in the snow.
100. He is so sharp it hurts him to walk.
101. He's so sharp he must have been eating razor soup. (Corbin, Ky.)
102. You're so sharp, you must have had razor blades for breakfast.
103. So sharp he'll stick in the ground, and so green he'll grow.
- ✓ 104. He is so short he could stand flat-footed and kiss a gnat's ass without bending his knees.
105. She is so skinny she can drink a glass of tomato juice and look like a thermometer.
- ✓ 106. So skinny that when he drinks strawberry pop he looks like a thermometer. (Saline Co., Ill.)
107. So skinny you can hear her bones rattle.
108. She is so skinny she could swallow a prune and look pregnant.
109. So slow you couldn't catch the seven-years-itch.
110. So slow he couldn't catch a bread wagon on (with) biscuit wheels.
111. So slow you can see the dead lice falling off.
112. So slow you have to set a stake to see him move.
113. The hills are so steep that chickens lay square eggs so they won't roll out of the nest.
114. The mountains were so steep you could look up the chimney and see who was coming down the road. (W. Tenn.)
115. Mountains so steep we planted potatoes on one side of the hill and picked them on the other. (W. Tenn.)

116. So stiff she'll break.
117. He's so stiff his name ought to be rigor mortis.
118. So stingy he'll skin a flea and sell it for its hide and tallow (or taller).
119. So stingy he would take candy from a baby.
120. So strong it can stand (walk) alone. (Usually said of coffee)
121. This stuff is so strong it will raise the hair on your head. (Said of liquor)
122. This stuff is so strong that it will make you slap your grand-maw down. (Said of liquor)
123. He is so tall he could p.¹⁵⁵ over a ten-rail fence.
124. He is so thin if he drank red lemonade he would make a good thermometer.
125. I know a woman so thin that if she eats a grape she looks pregnant.
126. She's so thin that when she swallowed a kidney bean whole, all her boy friends left town.
127. So thin he can hide behind the shadow of a match.
128. So thin you can't see his shadow.
- ↓ — 129. So thin he'd have to stand (up) twice to make a shadow.
130. He's so thin he has to stand twice in the same place to make a shadow.
131. So thin that you could read a newspaper through it.
132. So thin you have to shake the sheets to find her.
133. So thin you could shoot a straw through it.
134. So thirsty I can spit cotton.
135. So thirsty I can spit dust.
136. He is so tight he can't close his eyelids.
137. He's so tight he'd chase a penny a mile.
138. He's so tight that he crawls under the door to save the hinges.
139. He's so tight that he wouldn't give a dime to see the Statue of Liberty p.¹⁵⁵ across New York Bay.
140. So tight that he gives Lincoln a shave every time he spends a penny. (Massac Co., Ill.)
141. He's so tight he wouldn't give you the time of day. (W. Tenn.)
142. So tight that he don't know which end is up. (i.e. so drunk)
143. He's so tight he'll hold a dollar till the eagle hollers. (Shelbyville, Ky.)
144. He's so tight he pinches a nickel until the Indian rides the buffalo.
145. So tight he has to be primed to spit. (W. Tenn.)
146. So tight he screams.

147. So tight he screams when he walks.
148. So tight he had to screw his pants on.
149. So tight he squeaks.
150. So tight he squeaks when he walks.
151. So tight that he squeezes his money till the eagle screams.
152. He's so tight he would steal the nickels off a dead man's eyes.
153. He is so tight, he won't wear rubber heels on his shoes; afraid they will give.
154. So tight his shoes squeak.
155. I am so tired my ass is dragging my tracks out.
156. So tired he looks like warmed-over death. (Cumberland Co., Maine)
157. So tough you can't stick a fork in the gravy. (Said of tough meat.)
158. She's so ugly she couldn't eat pumpkins through a rail fence.
159. He is so ugly his face hurts.
160. I'm so weak I couldn't pull a (an old) setting hen off the nest.
161. So worthless they'll have to knock him in the head with a worn-out singletree on Judgment Day.
162. He's so young that he is still wet behind the ears.

Murray State College

Murray, Kentucky

Deep Roots

By CECILIA HENNEL HENDRICKS

"A little learning is a dang'rous thing," says Pope, and adds the directive, "Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

In folklore, if one wishes merely amusement or entertainment, the various types of tales may be used to serve only that pleasant purpose. But if folklore is to be regarded in the sense of revealing important patterns in history, philosophy, and religion which underlie and interpret present customs and beliefs, then "drinking deep" is necessary, for without a complete understanding of the mores behind the tale its full significance cannot be comprehended. Or to change the figure, a tree cannot be evaluated from the top branches only. The roots also must be examined.

An incident which occurred while I was in the Palau Islands of the Western Carolines in Micronesia during the summer of 1950 shows the necessity of such knowledge.

Palauan families frequently have hanging from the ceiling in their homes small models of the outrigger canoes they use for fishing and for travel from island to island. Made of light wood and bamboo, stained or painted in pleasing colors, the little models show skill and artistry.

Called to a home in which a death had occurred, a Roman Catholic priest of the Palau Mission noticed such a canoe hanging in the room in which the body of the dead person lay. After performing the proper religious rites (the funeral would be later), he engaged in conversation in Palauan with a man of the family, and commented on the well-made toy.

"But it is no toy," said the man. "It is what we use to hold food for the spirits of the dead."

The priest took the man to task, reminding him that since he had become a Christian he could no longer believe such superstition. The man listened, and at the end said simply: "But this morning the food was gone." Whereupon the priest replied with what seemed practical logic: "Have you no rats in this house?"

In telling me the incident, the priest explained: "At this point the look on the man's face warned me that I had better not pursue the topic further." So he wisely changed the subject of the conversation.

From an occidental 20th Century point of view, all the practical

logic seems to be on the priest's side.¹ But when one knows the full Palauan background, the reason for the native attitude becomes clear.

In Pacific mythology there are various accounts of the creation of man. A Samoan version tells of a primal god whose daughter, a snipe, on a long flight could not find a place to rest. He cast down a stone for her to rest on, and it became an island. He covered the place with vines to give her shade, and then in a moment of (unexplained) anger, put maggots in the vines. From the maggots, mankind originated.² Thus man is literally a worm. A Radak version calls male and female worms living in a shell the first living beings. In this variant, as also in one from Nauru, the worms raise the upper part of the shell to form the sky. The lower part is the earth.³

Dr. Luomala cites a tale from the Gilbert Islands in which an early god commanded sand and water to produce living offspring. This comes nearest the occidental idea that man was made of dust, or earth. In the islands, sand is the earth. Among the children produced by sand and water was an ambitious one named "Naureau the Younger, who vitalized his inactive siblings and ordered them to rise. They could not because the sky was too low. Eel becomes the most important skyraiser."

In the same article, Dr Luomala states: In Micronesia "an eel or a lizard is the mother [of creation]. Believing them temporary residences of spirits,⁴ Micronesians protect eels with a severe tabu. Eels are important in clan origins." After further discussion of eels, she adds: "Rats, like eels, are prominent mythological beings." And again, "The origin of fire is ascribed to Little Sister Rat stealing it from the sky."

To the Palauan the rat, like the eel, can represent (1) the grandmother of all creation, particularly friendly to man, and (2) clan spirits. If, then, a rat ate the food set out for the dead, if rats were

¹ We should however remind ourselves that the scientific understanding of rats as carriers of disease and wasteful consumers of food is entirely recent, going back only a very short time. The dislike and horror of rats has no long history even in the United States, and still does not exist in many parts of the world.

² Katharine Luomala, "Polynesian Mythology," *Encyclopedia of Literature*, Joseph T. Shipley, ed. (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 785a.

³ Katharine Luomala, "Micronesian Mythology," *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*. Maria Leach, ed., Jerome Fried, assoc. ed. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1950). Vol. II, 717-722. The material here cited is from manuscript kindly furnished to me by Dr. Luomala when I went to Micronesia in March, 1950.

⁴ Satan's assuming the snake form in the Garden of Eden story is a similar example, but of an evil, not a favorable spirit.

actually seen eating the food, here was proof positive that favorable spirits were present in the house.

By the Palauan an acceptance of such evidence could not be interpreted as superstition, but as an expression of faith in the ancient foundations. Hence to him the practical logic was all on his side.

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

Blacksmith and Death

By DAVID S. McINTOSH

On Halloween night October 31, 1950, in Harrisburg, Illinois, a group of teachers from Saline County, Illinois, were exchanging tales suitable to the occasion, and Mrs. Genevieve Richmond of Harrisburg, Illinois, told the following tale of the "Blacksmith and Death."¹ The tale was recorded and this version is a transcription of the recording. Mrs. Richmond said that her paternal grandfather's name was Pat O'Grady. In the tale, Pat O'Grady's name is changed to "Willy the Wisp."

The story about the young man that was to be married was recorded by Mrs. Genevieve Richmond two weeks later. She said that it was a true story about an incident in her great grandfather's life.

Mrs. Richmond said that her father used to tell stories to his family as he sat by the fireplace smoking his pipe.

Pat O'Grady

Pat O'Grady was a blacksmith and he worked hard at this business, and he had a wife, and a son. He was working, and slaving away, trying to make a honest dollar. He threw his tools down. He was disgusted for that one day, and he started home. He climbed the hill, and he had all his tools on his back. When he got to the hill he stumped his toe on something, and fell back down the hill. When he got to the bottom of the hill he said "I hope death takes me if I ever come down this hill again." He walked on home and had forgotten all about what he had said, and the next day he was tired as usual, and he came along with his knapsack down the hill. He did fall that time, and when he got to the bottom of the hill, there was Death. They called him Willy the Wisp. Death said, "Willy the Wisp, did you forget what you said yesterday evening?" He said, "Well yes, who are you?" He said, "Well I'm Death; you said that if you ever came down this hill again you hoped that Death would take you, and I'm here to take you." Willy said, "I have just a young son, I haven't lived long, give me a few years." And Death said, "All right you can have a few years." Willy said, "And I don't have a very good profession. I'd like to live those few years

¹ Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1946), p. 45 "Death in Person." A brief discussion of the Smith and Death is given. (Type 330).

in style, and be able to take care of my family." And Death said, "Just what profession would you like to follow?" He said, "I'd like to be a doctor, and be dignified, and have kind of a nice home." Death said, "And another, you may have that wish," and he said, "you may have two more." And Willy the Wisp said, "Well there's a cherry tree in our yard, and I never get to eat any of the cherries off the tree. When spring comes they're gone before I can get any of them." He said, "I'd just wish to have these cherries for my own." Death said, "Well that's your wish," and he said, "Anyone you find eating those cherries will stick to that tree till you've told them they can leave," and then he said, "The third wish; I have a rocking chair on my porch, and when I get through the days work, and want to rest, my wife's always in the chair, or some of the neighbors children, or some of the visitors, and I'd like to have that chair for myself." Death said, "You may have all three of those wishes," but he said, "in ten years I'll come back for you, and another thing Willy, I want you to remember that if you see me standing at the foot of the bed, you give the patient up, for that patient shall die; but if you see me standing at the head of the bed, then the patient will get well." So Willy the Wisp prospered for ten years. They passed quickly. He came home one spring from a trip out into the country, and there standing on the porch was Death, and he remembered that his ten years were up. And he said, "Oh no Death, I'm not ready to go yet." And Death said, "You said ten years, and your ten years are up." He said, "Well, just have a seat, and I'll tell the wife, and son good-by, so Death sat down in the rocking chair. And the minute he sat down in the rocking chair he knew Willy had him. He said, "All right Willy you have ten more years, but the next time you won't catch me sleeping." So he was gone for ten more years, and Willy prospered, and was very happy. The ten years passed quickly, and it was spring, and the cherries were ripe, and he came home one day, and there stood Death in the yard, while the cherry tree framed the back ground, and Willy said, "Death I'm not ready yet, I haven't tasted a cherry yet off that tree." And Death said, "Well gather you a little basket or box, and take them along with you." And he said, "You gather me a box while I tell the folks good-bye." And of course the same thing happened; when Death reached up to get the cherries, Willy had him again. So ten more years went by, and Willy prospered. The Dukes, Lords, and Ladies all called him to come, and nurse them through their illnesses. One day he walked into the room of a famous Duke, and there he saw Death standing at the foot of the bed. The doctors had been called from far and

wide, but no one could cure the Duke. Willy said, "Everyone step out of the room please. I want to be alone with the patient." And all of the family left the room, and quickly Willy took the Duke, and turned him head around, and Death was standing of course, at his head. Death was aggravated. He said, "You'll not do this again. When your ten years are up this time you've played all of your tricks." And Willy had a enjoyable ten years, and oh he was too happy. His ten years were up shortly, and Death came back, and Willy prepared to go with him. He told all his friends good-bye, and his wife, and they departed across the Irish Sea. As they were on the ship, going across, Willy was looking out over the waters, and he said, "Death, you're really a wonderful person." He said, "You can do such wonderful things, even just that small bottle on the deck there," he said, "I just know you could make your self invisible and get in there." Death said, "That would be the simplest of tricks." And Willy said, "As the last thing you can do for me, I'd just like to see it." So swish and Death was in the bottle, and Willy corked it up, and threw it into the Irish Sea. And that was during the time Methuselah lived so long. That was during that time.

Young Man That Was To Be Married

I told you the story of Will of the Wisp; that story was told to me over and over by my father who was a great story teller. He was born in Ireland, and reared by his grandparents. This grandfather was a tailor, and the grandfather traveled from one small town or village making clothes for the people. He had fun traveling with his grandparents, and listening to the stories that his grandfather would pick up along the way. The story, "Will of the Wisp," was a favorite of my Dad's; another one was a story about a young man that was to be married. Grandfather and grandmother started out to visit this small village and stay all night with these people. They were to make the wedding clothes for the son; the son was to be married the following week. In those days, tailors traveled to the homes, and made outfits, and lived in the home with the people. This bridegroom was a lazy, shiftless sort of a person, but the parents were well to do, and they had built a home down the road for the bridegroom. Grandfather Reed worked days making the suits for the bridegroom. He finished his work; they collected their money and started on their way. It was late in the evening, and as it was a good distance to the next town, the man said that he would like for grandmother and grandfather Reed to spend the night in the

house down the road; it was completed now, so they said that would be fine, and they walked on down the road, and made ready to spend the night there at this new home. Grandfather Reed carried with him a blackthorn stick that was his only means of protection on these trips. Grandmother Reed's name was Celia and as a precautionary measure, grandfather Reed always slept with the blackthorn stick under his pillow. That night they were aroused from their sleep by a noise in the back part of the house. They listened, and before they knew it a form was standing at the foot of the bed; he said, "Mr. Reed, hand me the bag of money that you have," and grandfather Reed started to get out of the bed, and the man said, "No, just hand me the bag of money"; so grandfather Reed said in a very loud voice, "Celia, hand me the bag of money from under the pillow." Grandmother Reed knew that the money was never kept under the pillow, but she knew the blackthorn stick was always kept there, so she said "all right." She handed him the blackthorn stick, and in a very short time grandfather Reed made away with the burgler. The next morning, as they were setting off on their way, they met the father of the bridegroom; the father said, "There won't be a wedding for a while, our son met with an accident"; and grandfather Reed said, "What sort of an accident?" "Well, he said he didn't know, but he came home in the night, and he was bruised terribly about the face, and the arms, and it was a peculiar sort of a bruise, his skin around his face, and his hands were pitted, as tho he had been beaten with some sort of an odd stick." He didn't notice, or pretend not to notice grandfather Reed's blackthorn stick. Grandfather Reed and grandmother Reed went on their way to the next town, happy to get away from this situation.

Southern Illinois University

Carbondale, Illinois

The Stillwater Tragedy

A Quaker Ballad

By OPAL THORNBURG

On January 24, 1837, in Turtlecreek School, which was one of the schools under the direction of the Quakers of Warren County, Ohio, a twenty-year-old student, Lurana Steddom, wrote in her teacher's "Analectic Repository & Miscellaneous Scrap Book" a ballad she had learned from her mother. The teacher was Marcus Mote, likewise twenty years old, who later that year married Lurana's sixteen-year-old sister Rhoda.

Marcus Mote, who became a well known primitive artist of Lebanon, Ohio, and Richmond, Indiana, preserved his "Analectic Repository," adding a number of marginal notes at a much later period. After his death in 1898 it was kept by his daughter, Jennie Mote Ibaugh of Richmond. On Mrs. Ibaugh's death in 1924 the album was purchased with certain other of Marcus Mote's sketchbooks and notebooks by Earlham College but remained until recently in the possession of Harlow Lindley, former Earlham librarian and now Secretary Emeritus of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society. It is now in the Earlham College Library.

The ballad's origin in a Quaker community makes it unique, for members of the Society of Friends until recent decades regarded music as one of the snares of Satan, and poetry was looked upon with almost as much suspicion. For this reason it seems likely that the ballad was never sung. Doubtless it was transmitted orally, for meaningless words and phrases indicate that the original wording was imperfectly heard or misunderstood. Thus Lurana Steddom wrote "a future fee" for "futurity," and "From mature birds and free" for "From nature's bonds set free."

The locale of the story was the Stillwater River valley near West Milton, Miami County, Ohio, to which the first settlers, members of the Society of Friends, had come in 1802. The drowning occurred only seven years later, and in so primitive a community the ballad could probably only be transmitted orally.

The victims of the tragedy, William Iddings and Joseph Teague, bore family names still familiar in the area of West Branch Quarterly Meeting of Friends, whose center was West Milton. That the ballad was composed by a Quaker is evident from the distinctly Quaker manner of indicating the date—"Twass on fifth day of month the

third." A further indication is that fact that the young men were coming from "meeting" rather than from church. The master of West Branch Monthly Meeting School may have had a hand in writing it, as suggested by the awareness of poetic metres and the classical allusions, rare in folk ballads.

The ballad traveled to the Turtlecreek community, some forty miles southward in this way: Joseph Teague, who was seventeen at the time of his drowning, had a sister Susanna, age ten, who doubtless memorized the ballad since it concerned her dead brother. There was much visiting between Quaker communities, particularly on the occasions of Quarterly and Yearly Meetings, so that in time Susanna Teague married Samuel Steddom from Miami Quarterly Meeting, which included Turtlecreek. Susanna Steddom was the mother of Lurana who recorded the ballad. In Marcus Mote's handwriting in the margin is the note "From Mother Susanna Steddom." Genealogical records in the possession of Mrs. Lena Iorns, Lebanon, Ohio, a great granddaughter of Marcus and Rhoda Steddom Mote, show the date of Joseph Teague's death as that of the drowning in the ballad, though her records do not indicate the cause of his death.

The ballad, untitled, follows just as it was recorded by Lurana Steddom except for the omission of the too numerous commas. The suggested corrections in parentheses were supplied from Marcus Mote's marginal notes; those in brackets by myself. Many of the lines are still obscure through the loss of the original words and the substitution of others with similar sound.

1. From anapaest the muse has fled
On Iambic to dwell
And hath a woful narative
In prosody to tell.
2. A monument of this event
In poems I'll pursue,
Whose doleful sequels will appear
When it shall come to view.
3. This sequal cause right understood
Hath long affected been,
And from [But for] the poets tragic pen
Hath passed away unseen.
4. But I recall to memory
Some sad intelligence
Which I shall pen in poetry,
And on this wise commence.

5. The grate disaster happened,
As will be seen below,
It was in Miami County
In the state of Ohio.
6. Fair Newton Township was the place
Wher this event appeared.
The state and County heretofore
You have already heard.
7. Twas on fifth day of month the third
In eighteen hundred nine,
When spring her morning race began
In colours green to spine [shine].
8. There were some youthful masculine
Which had to meeting been,
And comeing to a river's brink
As they came back again.
9. Stillwater was the river called,
Or title of its mane [name],
Tho waft of waters there and then
Did far surpass the same.
10. For the rain it had descened [descended],
The Ice in pieces rent,
An fill'd the spacious channel
Where waters did frequent.
11. A passage now depended,
Tho danger would pursue,
For all must needs pass over
In a totery canoe.
12. Yet courage in them ruled
And they began to cross,
Not considering the risk
There was of being lost.
13. Some rounds were prosecuted
To help the older class,
For they were aged well as youth
Who over deign'd (design'd) to pass.

14. At length they all had crossed but four
Who on the shore remained
Awaiting for the ferryman
When he returned again.
15. The conductor now arived,
With haste they jumped in,
And started up the shore to take
The advantage of the stream.
16. One said unto the company,
Suppose we take a ride,
And with consent they sailed up
Along the river's side.
17. Some distance up they rowed
Before they faced about.
Attend and you shall quicky hear
How sad the scene came out.
18. An Island they approached
When they had crossed one
Of the hasty sluices
Which hurlingly did run.
19. No tarry here elapsed,
The crisis is begun,
And soon the driven vessel
To the other bayous run.
20. No sooner had they here arrived
With pleasure in their view
Than fate with unrelentless art
Did them in hast pursue.
21. For insted of turning down the stream,
Like prudence would devise,
With haste they rush'd straight accross;
Then to their great surprise
22. Their canoe topsyturvy turned,
Contrary to their great surprise (art)
And all into imersion hurl'd
To act the drowners part.

23. Not long they in submission (submersion) lay,
 Anon they all arose,
 But could not swim as heretofore
 For the impediment of clothes.
24. And two of them for there lives
 Caught hold of the canoe,
 And by ajument down the stream
 Were saved by much ado.
25. The ferryman being near the shore
 No efforts great received,
 By caching hold upon a tree,
 From whence he was relieved.
26. The muse will to the others turn
 And view the lurid scene,
 The [For] aid imploring sighs they bring
 While floating down the stream.
27. The one had never learn'd to swim,
 Tho age he did not lack,
 And son he sunk into the deep
 The affects to counteract,
28. Wherein did muddy torrents run
 This ordial to try,
 But soon with transmigration's right
 Of course he did comply.
29. William Iddings was his name,
 A youth of probity,
 And from contagious intercourse
 Full likely he was free.
30. The other tho (a) swimmer good
 At first was strangled so
 And of sensation so deprived
 He knew not how to row.
31. The want of breath and chill'd limbs
 Did still impair his streangth,
 And all his cloths so heavy grew
 With water he at length

32. Overcome with the repeated hurls
Which Ice and water gave
Was from the course of nature forced
To take a watery grave.
33. But ere this rapid drowner sunk,
When strength and hope were ore [o'er],
He bade them all adieu by saying
That he could do no more.
34. In ardent valediction
At such a baneful time,
When repleted sorrows mixed with grief
Did their distress combine.
35. This late described genius
Was Joseph Teague by name,
A youth of moral probity
And had an honest fame.
36. But fate had laid (the) basis
Of this catastrophe,
And fortune willingly hath built
The fabrick which we see.
37. Thus were two transmigration made
Unto a final bourn,
That endless boundry from whence
No traveller returns.
38. In which tremendous act may all
Of their survivour see
How short the transmigration is
From time to a future fee (to futurity).
39. Huge fate in this catastrophe
Hath wrought a great deluge,
And left the mourners all bereft
Of permanent refuge.
40. Deep sorrows have but just begun
Their destiny to lave,
For these lamented corps remain
In thetis (Thetis') watery grave.

41. Could Davids grief or Jobs distress
Or Jacobs desolation
Compared with this unhappy lot
Of dolorous probation.
42. Tho these paternal patriarchs
Were oft in grief arrayd,
Yet this dilemma was as great
As great as nature could parrade.
43. And now to tell how long they lay
In this itinerant state
Will fill the hearer with surprise
There on to meditate.
44. Full seven days and nights elapsed.
Before the first was found.
At length his chilled corpse was spied
From Icy shades profound.
45. Alas what joys and sorrow might
Of course there must have been
To see a lost lamented son
Return to view again,
46. Which had so long in thetis lain,
Of breath and life deprived,
Yet was his cheeks in blossome red
As when he (was) alive.
47. But when into the fluid air
His stark remains were laid,
His cheeks which did with red abound
Did soon begin to fade.
48. And now the cypress called him home
Unto that final fee [futuraity],
Amids nocturnal (shades) to rest,
From mature birds and free
(nature's bonds set free).
49. Hence did the other corpse remain
Until the eleventh day,
Which was by investigation found
Close where the other lay.

50. A heavy meting now ensued,
When kindred came to see
How boasted fate had triumphed with
Their consanguinity.
51. Which had so long in thetis lain,
A heterogenous roam.
Yet was his cheeks in ruddy bloom
As when he liv'd a son.
52. And was by water still preserv'd
Until the hour came
When mother earth received his corpse
Unto herself again.
53. In which reception was fulfill'd
That angelic zone,
Dust thou art and unto dust
Again thou shalt return.
54. A debt which all the human race
Is bound by tye to pay
Before a passage can be made
From time to a future fee (futurity)
55. A warning for the negligent
Throughout the human race
That king an Cesar rich and poor
Must go unto that place.
56. And now the melancholy muse
Will bid (the) theme adieu,
In hope no more the like to hear,
Take realms and cantons two (through)

*Earlham College**Richmond, Indiana*

Book Reviews

Selected Writings of Louise Pound. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1949). xiv—365 pp.

As a monument to a scholar's achievement and influence and in the wide range of its scholarly interests, this book resembles a *Festschrift*, with this difference—that the collection is made up of the scholar's own writings. Doubly honored is this author, who is both honorer and honoree. At the same time, the volume differs from similar collections of scholarly papers in that from the miscellany, taken together with the appended bibliographical and biographical data, emerges a portrait of the career and mind of a remarkable woman, who has never ceased to live up to her creed that the "law of life," of language, literature, and folklore, is "change and growth."

While Louise Pound's academic reputation rests largely, and solidly, on her pioneering and crusading in the fields of American English and poetic origins, she is no mere innovator or champion of new causes but a true leader and conservator in the humanities. Thus, in her dual devotion to dialect and folklore, she has avoided scholarly schizophrenia by maintaining a healthy respect for common ties and boundaries and regarding the two fields as closely related but with their own "angles of approach" and their own rich soil to till. In her own work, however, she has proved that both fields and angles can be successfully combined in a single scholar, when that scholar has the necessary breadth and depth of scholarship to take both *Volksprache* and folk-say as her province. Specifically, her lively historical and imaginative interests and gifts have transcended the "good fences" that make "good neighbors" and developed far beyond her original concern with language and literature to embrace idiomatic and vernacular expression of all kinds and enable her to cut out for herself a special field in the "floating material" between language and literature, between the unlettered and the lettered sources, the oral and the written levels.

What is most important, from the point of view of this book, is that a single, central approach—folkloristic in the broadest and best sense—dominates and unifies her work. This is also an interdisciplinary approach, not only because it encompasses literary, linguistic, folklore, and educational subjects but because it brings to bear on them a catholic, eclectic knowledge, drawn from the fields of the social sciences and psychology as well as from literary history and criticism, philology, and folklore proper.

To cite (out of context and apart from the rich texture of her book) a few isolated examples of the advantages and benefits of this method, there is, for instance, the paper on "Caedmon's Dream Song," in which she reconsiders the Caedmon legend in the light of more recent dream-song lore of American Indians and Australian aborigines. Similarly, in "The Term 'Communal,'" which followed closely on the heels of her provocative and challenging book, *Poetic Origins and the Ballad* (1921), and its tasteful and sagacious American counterpart, *American Ballads and Songs* (1922), she draws upon the findings of ethnology (in the form of the actual song and dance usage of living primitive groups), law, economics, and sociology to support her arguments in favor of individual authorship. Or, to follow her in her interest in the psychology and folklore of dreams, she painstakingly and amusingly investigates the language of dreams, only to conclude that, for all their unconscious wit, humor, poetry, and fantasy, their evidence of the word-blending and word-play processes, and their reflection of the hinterland of the sleeper's mind, dream word-formations, phrases, and sayings can have little more than curiosity value for the reason that dreams are private whereas language is social and public.

Always, as in these examples, she preserves a nice regard for poetry as well as for truth. Thus, as in her exposure of the common anthological fallacy of dating the English and Scottish ballads with reckless disregard of differences of level, period, region, and type, as indicated by tone and treatment and the dates of the events narrated and of the recovery of the text, a fine aesthetic and social perceptiveness in matters of style and taste is linked with sound historical scholarship. In her studies of verbal and stylistic grotesqueries and whimsies—slang, colloquial usage, dialect, tradenames, journalese: "The Kraze for 'K,'" "Popular Variants of 'Yes,'" extensions of "it," indefinite names, "American Euphemisms for Dying, Death, and Burial"—the same sense of the poetic and social values of language enables her to write soundly and colorfully about word-making and phrase-making phenomena as part of the two-way process of linguistic growth and change from the bottom up as well as from the top down. In this connection, one might draw an interesting parallel between her and H. L. Mencken—she a scholar who can be entertaining and he an entertaining writer who can be scholarly. Nor is it too farfetched, I trust, to see in her linguistic and folklore research the same sense of social process and feeling for origins and direction that distinguishes the work of her brother Roscoe in legal history and theory.

These qualities are displayed with equal effectiveness whether she is writing about "The Future of Poetry" or the historical and contemporary responsibilities and opportunities of the English teacher, about the growth of studies in American English or the place of women in graduate study. There are the same originality and precision of historical scholarship, the same sound judgment and restrained eloquence, the same balanced perspective that made her the embattled crusader for the individualistic theory of ballad origins. "One's sympathies," she says wisely, "are with the agitators, in their pressure for progress There is need, however, for reinforcing reverence for and sympathetic interpretation of man's accomplishment in the past."

The ability to examine and reappraise past and present in each other's light and to see language and literature, folklore and education, in relation to cultural history and as part of the "whole activity" of the group is what makes Louise Pound a folklorist in the truest sense, whether she is concerned with the lore of Nebraska snakes and caves or of drowned or sunken cities, of Dickens' or Cooper's American dialect or of advertising neologisms, of abridged writing or of headline writing. The local and the universal, the antiquarian and the contemporary, the tremendous and the trifling, the curious and the significant, interest her equally, and with equally profitable and readable results, of which the present selection from her impressive list of publications (only incidental, we are told, to her well-known activities in teaching and organization work) is an appetite-whetting sampling.

True to her pioneer heritage and her own folk philosophy, she has, in spite of the extensive variety of her interests, as reflected in her bibliography, remained steadfastly loyal to her native Nebraska and Middle West, and has intensively cultivated her own vineyard. Accordingly, Midwestern folklorists have a right to expect and demand a sequel to the present volume in the form of a collection of her Nebraska and Midwestern folklore studies and collectanea, only three of which are included here. Meanwhile, this well balanced and integrated selection (for which all credit is due to the University of Nebraska Press and those who supplied material for the book, Lowry C. Wimberly, Arthur G. Kennedy, Mamie Meredith, and Ruth Odell) is a fitting and deserved, if long overdue, testimonial to the humanistic learning and literary ability of one of our foremost women scholars.

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The Ballad Tree. Evelyn K. Wells. (New York: Ronald Press, 1950). 363 pp.

On page 8, in her introduction, Evelyn Wells states the purpose of *The Ballad Tree*.

The reason for another book about ballads is the very multiplicity of the information available: it is a somewhat confusing matter for the casual reader, as well as for the student or critic, to apprehend the Child ballad as it is in America today. The following chapters present texts and tunes as sung traditionally in the last fifty years in England and America, with comment which selects from the many separate and special studies and weaves them together into one fabric. In the light of this comment the true ballad, compound of racial memories, mirror of folkways, tried and refined by a hundred singers, may be seen and enjoyed for what it is.

She goes about accomplishing this purpose by combining descriptive and historical essays on the ballad with about sixty accompanying texts. The essays, which are readable and entertaining, cover such material as ballad types (Robin Hood, historical, Border, and romantic songs), the ballad and the nursery, the ballad and Christianity, problems of origin, ballad scholarship, tunes, American informants, and literary uses of the ballad. Most of them will be found useful by the scholar, as well as by the beginner. Surely, the summaries of the Robin Hood problem, of the theories of origin, and of folk music would serve as convenient assignments for a teacher to give his class.

The texts, included along the way in the book, fall into two classifications: songs reprinted from established compilations made earlier by Child, Sharp, Barry, and others; and songs collected by Miss Wells herself in her wanderings about the country or during her stays at the Pine Mountain Settlement School in Kentucky. In this latter group are to be found new variants of Child numbers 7, 73, 75, 81, 84, 95, 132, 200, 209, 278, and 286, "Bold Jack Donahue," "Brian o'Lyn," "The Frog's Wedding," as well as half a dozen common love lyrics and rarer religious songs. The use of these texts is in every case illustrative, and Miss Wells makes no specific effort to correlate them to their traditions and variants.

The book, thus, clearly approaches the ballad tree in a popular and introductory way. Many of the outstanding problems of folk song scholarship are ignored, while those that are tackled are given descriptive rather than controversial treatment. In fact, the scholar

used to fretting and arguing over such subjects as Bishop Percy, literary uses of the ballad, and theories of origin will probably find himself rather paradoxically troubled by the placid *media via* Miss Wells treads throughout her sixteen chapters.

The scholar may also find himself bothered by the opportunities that are missed in the book. Certainly, if a work is to deal with the ballad tree, it should attempt to explain ballad variation and spread to some extent, should probe the manner in which folk lyric develops from narrative, and should treat the temper and language modifications that the broadside undergoes in oral tradition. Certainly, if a chapter concerning literary uses of the ballad is to be undertaken, it seems some effort should be made to clarify the problems of aesthetic standards and sophisticated definitions that immediately suggest themselves and which no one has successfully dealt with to date. And, certainly, if the American branches of the ballad tree are to be a featured part of the book, a more searching and detailed treatment should be given them than is found in the discussions of Child and Sharp or in the "travelogue-like" chapter concerning American folk songs and singers.

But, whatever the reason, Miss Wells does not choose to seize these opportunities. She, rather, sticks to the problems that have already been treated by Gerould, Pound, Hustvedt, and the rest; and her publication, in spite of its title, does not satisfy the desperate need for a book that will undertake the definition of ballad problems that have not been reviewed hundreds of times over.

In conclusion, then, Miss Wells' work, although it does not contribute much to the field of ballad scholarship in the way of new thinking, new organization, or new research, is a sound summary of the matter its author sets out to cover. It satisfies its purpose in that it does weave together many of the loose threads of ballad material. And, as an extremely pleasant and relaxing book, it should stimulate its lay readers to look farther into folksong and folklore. Thus, *The Ballad Tree* will make a good elementary text for courses in Anglo-American folksong: perhaps not completely satisfactory, perhaps too narrow in scope, but certainly encouraging as a means of introduction. At least, at present, there is no better "textbook" on the market.

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Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia. Helen Creighton and Doreen H. Senior. (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1950). xv+284 pp. (\$6.50).

For informativeness about our English folk song tradition—not only in the Northeast, but in the entire country as well—Miss Creighton's second Nova Scotia collection is even more important than her first, issued in 1933. It is good to have one's acquaintance with a basic fund of folk songs renewed by such truly representative material. Many features of the present work remind us not to make regional boundaries too definite, or let them get too strongly fixed in our minds, when we think of our folk song. Here we have a collection intensely *northeastern* in many traits, yet emphasizing also in its content the fact that our national folk-song tradition—whether imported or built here on imported bases—is an unbroken whole. Tune-versions and song-versions alike bear witness to this fact in the Creighton volume, where often certain features of some item will either clarify or supplement those of a corresponding item in a southern collection. (Of course the process continually works in reverse, also—from South to North.)

Most of the pieces are of British origin; and of these, again, most are standard songs in both North and South. Regional differences show up, as usual, in the details of individual items of text or melody. Of course, the most distinct regional songs are seafaring or lumbering pieces—types almost unheard of in the South. A special feature of the tune-versions here is their unusually marked English, Irish or Scottish character, showing clearly the national melodic habits that have come to settle down side by side in America. This persistence of national-style traits—reminding us sometimes of Petrie's musical gatherings, then of Greig's, again of Sharp's—serves to guarantee the fidelity with which the singers have preserved their old-world inheritance.

This collection is too rich to discuss at length; I shall restrict myself to some notes on textual and musical items. Child ballads, of course, we may expect to see anywhere; but several here are more characteristic of northeastern than of southern song. *Hind Horn* was known farther south than New England, but has not as yet been collected in an entire southern version. Miss Creighton's claim for *The Bold Pedlar and Robin Hood*, p. 67, seems erroneous: see Flanders-Brown, *Vermont Folk-Songs and Ballads*, 2d ed. (1932), p. 219, for a version collected in Vermont in 1930. British songs which the Northeast has preserved better than the South are *Gallows*, p.

109; *Bold Fisherman*, p. 113 (first found by Barry in Maine); *Branded Lambs*, p. 133; *Brown Girl*, p. 139; *Jack the Sailor*, p. 167; *Jovial Young Sailor*, p. 179; *When a Man's in Love*, p. 214; *Come All My Old Comrades*, p. 222; and *Sweet Primeroses*, p. 127, at last collected in this land, to its proper lovely air. Pieces well known in the South, but not usually met in far northeastern collections are found on pp. 155, 193, 209, 257, and 279 to end. The southern tune to *Cherry Tree Carol A*, p. 35, is understandable, since its negro singer's informants brought it from the South (cf. airs in Sharp-Karpeles No. 15 A, and Morris, *Folksongs of Florida*, No. 155). The two final stanzas of *Joys of Mary B*, p. 278, seem a grossly corrupted intrusion from a typical southern "bereavement" song—cf. Belden, *Ballads and Songs* (Missouri Folklore Soc.), p. 467.

This Nova Scotia music is a wonderful study in melodic conservation and recreation. Of what can be accomplished when singers alter the *modes* of close tune-variants, there are some especially good examples. The *common repertory* of our ancestral British music is everywhere, as we usually discover when we scan an eastern regional collection of our folk song.

The always dominant *Lord Randal* family of tunes is represented by the airs on pages 4, 8, 22, 23, 41, 42, 62, 86, 87, 118, 124, 141, 143, 150, 156, 157, 165, 170 (first air), 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 189 (both airs), 191, 195, 200 (second air), 204, 218, 219 (all airs), 221, 222, 226, 227, 228, 236, 240, 267, 269, and 270. The tune on p. 124 may possibly illustrate how a piece originally distinct gets assimilated to a well-known tune-family; cf. the beautiful pentatonic, "Highland"-sounding version in *Journal of the Irish Folk Song Soc.*, I (1904), 57, "Bonny, bonny was my seat." The air on p. 150 is common in the Northeast (and recently reported from the South) to "Lovely Jamie." The tune of p. 204 betrays one particular singer's tendency to cross-modalize his minor-mode tunes by making them end on the subtonic, instead of the expected tonic.

The widespread *Butcher-Bateman* melody is represented by the airs on pp. 26, 28, 31, 123, 127 (second air), 134, 135, 144, 187, 194. The air on p. 127 is the regular one for its text, *The Sweet Primeroses*; that on p. 194 is a still lovelier set of the same version.

The Bailiff's Daughter melody appears in the airs on pp. 12, 15, 17, 36, 40, 43, 47, 50, 73, 113, 151, 153, 266. Perhaps pp. 108, 265, are also based on this air. The tune of "Three fair maids a-milking did go," which is found to other words on p. 168, may also possibly have affinity with this group.

The *Lazarus* tune appears on pp. 19, 121, 128, 161, 176 (appar-

ently a set first worn down, then eked out), 214-15. The *Child I-II* air appears on pp. 115, 126, 127 (first air), 167 (apparently), 233. The *King John and the Abbot* tune appears on p. 238 and perhaps on p. 239; while the *God Rest You Merry* air, sung (as often) to *Joys of Mary*, is on p. 275.

The Irish air often called "On the brink of the white rock," and usually associated with *Reilly Bound for America*, *The Foggy Dew*, and *A Shantyman's Life*, occurs on pp. 67, 158, 172, 173, 174 (to the "Reilly" song), 274. The air on p. 229 resembles both this tune and a version of the *Lord Randal* melody; it may result from crossing, conscious or not. The air to *The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin*, p. 94, is one of a British tune-family that has received little attention and is not clearly distinguished. Its members include music for some Scoto-Irish versions of *The Cruel Mother*.

Songs found here with sets of the airs generally accompanying them in British-American oral tradition are the *Tarry Trowsers* version on p. 213; *The Fox Went Out*, p. 248, to its commonest British air, the broadside ballad tune "Now comes on the glorious year"; *The Irish Girl*, p. 198, to one of its regular airs ("The Maid of Timahoe," also current with other songs in the Northeast). *The Baffled Knight*, p. 64, has its usual tune; so do *The Gaberlunzie Man*, p. 100; *The Gypsy Laddie*, p. 72; *The Golden Glove*, p. 148; *Get Up and Bar the Door*, p. 92; *Sixteen Come Sunday*, p. 164; *Jolly Ploughboy*, p. 177; *Lost Jimmie Whalen*, p. 186 (though this air has been found with different songs in western Pennsylvania); *Brennan on the Moor*, p. 236; *Well Sold the Cow*, p. 238; *Billy Boy*, p. 246; and *Frog and Mouse*, p. 250.

Jessie and Jimmie, p. 170, would seem another fragment of *William and Nancy*, p. 156. On p. 2, Child No. 4 goes with a widespread northeastern set of the old *Musgrave and Lady Barnard* air given by Chappell (*Pop. Mus. of the Olden Time*, I, 170). On p. 9 we see *Lord Randal* set to the air most often found with *The Golden Glove*; while on p. 10 *Lord Randal* is joined to an air found in Pennsylvania with *Young Johnny Doyle*. *Cruel Mother* tunes on pp. 18, 20 must be northeastern Scottish, as they resemble airs noted by Greig in Aberdeen, but not well known elsewhere. On p. 24 is a *Wedderburn* tune which is a set of one collected in Michigan, but learned in Pennsylvania (Gardner & Chickering, *Ballads . . . of Southern Michigan*, p. 141); and on p. 25 we see a *Two Brothers* air (of Irish provenience?) resembling a *House Carpenter* tune given by Barry. The *Barbara Allen* tunes, pp. 52-54, are associated with North England, being close to some gathered by Kidson; and the

Sweet Trinity tunes, pp. 102-106, are all strongly northeastern American, though the first one shows affiliation with sets from the South. This last-mentioned complex of airs has never been worked out.

The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington texts here (pp. 56-57) are joined, exceptionally, to a British tune often appearing with "Farewell My Joy and Heart" (*The Summer It Is Past*)—and so is *The Bonny House O' Airlie*, p. 70.

Katherine Jaffray, p. 79, goes to one of its old-country tunes, reported from Ireland under name of "The Fairy Troop." Texts and airs to *The Grey Cock* (pp. 83-85) reveal the unity of southern and northeastern tradition and represent a fine Anglo-Irish form of the ballad already recorded by Joyce. The *Our Goodman* air, p. 91, is a Scoto-Irish dance tune popular since the 18th century; and the *Gallows* tune, p. 110, is a short form of the beautiful old Irish melody "Youghal Harbor," also known to other texts in the Northeast. The *Brown Girl* airs (pp. 139-40) are distinctively Irish in tradition. *Soldier, Soldier* goes to "The British Grenadiers" (p. 255) and "The Girl I Left behind Me" (p. 256)—both "soldier" tunes. The game-tune on p. 264 is an interesting composite, mingling the familiar game-song strain out of the tune "Nancy Dawson" with part of the second half of "La bonne aventure, Oh gai" and another universally known children's air.

One common British melody notably absent from the present collection is "The Boyne Water." This is curious, inasmuch as the air is fairly well known in various connections over the Northeast. Unless the *Cruel Mother* air, p. 20 (D), is a set (as it may well be), the *Boyne Water* melody does not appear in this regional collection.

To sum up: Miss Creighton's volume adequately represents our inherited Anglo-, Scoto-, Hiberno-American folk song tradition in its unimpaired and uncontaminated beauty. The texts, on the whole, are finely preserved; the airs often distinguished by a noble sweep and flow. The entire collection bears witness to conservatism and good taste among our northeastern folk artists. And this aspect is recognized by Professor J. D. Robins, who in a preface cites these versions as touchstones of genuineness in folk art. Professor Robins also pays timely respects to those who would pass off as real folk songs pieces that are quite personal; that never have undergone the impersonalizing and remolding processes of tradition; and that are couched in language which would decidedly militate against their ever being adopted by the singing folk.

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The British Traditional Ballad in North America. Tristram P. Coffin. (Philadelphia: The American Folklore Society, *Bibliographical Series*, Vol. II, 1950). xvi+188 pp.

Although there are almost as many definitions of the word *ballad* as there are American variants of "Barbara Allen," the information which has been collected and compounded about ballad-singing, ballad-making, and ballad texts by a various assortment of antiquarians, folklorists, anthropologists, students of literature, musicologists, and wayfaring strangers has increased tremendously since March 26, 1872, when Professor Francis James Child wrote to his Scandinavian colleague, Svend Grundtvig: "The sources of English and Scotch ballads may be regarded as sealed or dried up forever." Whether or not Professor Child ever privately reversed this opinion we shall never know; he never publicly contradicted it, and his students and colleagues expressed similar opinions. As a consequence, the decade or so immediately following the publication of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* in 1882-98 was spent by scholars in an examination of the known and published ballad texts for the evidence which those texts might contribute to our knowledge of poetic origins.

The precise date when scholars became aware of the fact that the work of collecting was not finished is difficult to ascertain. One of the earliest acknowledgments that there was still much collecting to be done was made in 1905 by Professor H. M. Belden in an article entitled "The Study of Folk-Song in America" (*Modern Philology*, II [April, 1905], 573-579). Perhaps it was this article which gave rise to the renaissance of ballad collecting, perhaps it was the work done in New England by Mr. Phillips Barry, perhaps it was the controversy over ballad origins: whatever the cause, the years from about 1910 to the present day have seen the publication of over one hundred volumes of ballads and folksongs and literally thousands of texts in these volumes and in articles in the learned journals. The time has now come to raise a question: to what point have the long hours spent in assembling these collections been spent? Mere collecting is not enough; moreover, the age of discovery is largely over and it is now time for us to consolidate our gains by a careful re-examination of those things which we have brought together.

One of the greatest difficulties which beset the ballad scholar is the lack of sufficient bibliographic material. Once one exhausts the headnotes to the major collections of ballad texts (a tiring job, for in them there is much duplication) and the bibliographic material which

usually accompanies them, he is left with pitifully few resources; there are, of course, many lists of folksongs found in particular regions such as those of Miss Pound, Professors Shearin and Combs, and the more recent *Folksongs of Virginia: A Descriptive Index and Classification* by Professor Arthur Kyle Davis as well as the listings of folksongs found in such special library collections as those of the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the Cleveland Public Library—but these require considerable on-the-spot research before they mean very much. There is also *A Bibliography for the Study of American Folk-Songs with many Titles of Folk-Songs (and Titles that have to do with Folk-Songs) from other Lands* published in a limited edition by the Mitre Press in the late thirties for Mellinger E. Henry, but this volume is nearly as discursive as its title and, in the words of its compiler, it “. . . is not a scientific bibliography.”

In the past few months, however, three volumes which answer the ballad scholar's bibliographic needs have been published: *A Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong*, by Charles Haywood. (New York: Greenberg, 1951). xxx+1292 pp.; *Native American Balladry*, by G. Malcolm Laws, Jr. (Philadelphia: The American Folklore Society, *Bibliographical Series*, Vol. I, 1950). xii+276 pp.; and *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*, by Tristram P. Coffin. The two first of these will be reviewed in subsequent issues of *MIDWEST FOLKLORE*; the last we shall concern ourselves with here.

An attempt “. . . to present factually the material of and the completed scholarship on the Child ballad in America” Mr. Coffin's book is a fundamental piece of scholarship in its own right. No mere listing of ballad texts and scholarly articles, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America* is four different but closely related things: primarily it is a bibliography of the texts of the various Child ballads arranged consecutively according to the numbers which Professor Child assigned to each ballad; secondly, it is an analysis according to story types (versions) of the extant American variants; third, it is a summary of the scholarship which centers upon each ballad; and fourth, it is an analysis of the material which it, itself, presents.

Realizing that only in a very loose sense are ballads a unified piece of literature, that essentially each ballad and its series of variants is an individual thing related to other ballads only by the somewhat tenuous connection of being the same kind of thing and by the somewhat more real connection of being told and sung by the same cultural group, Mr. Coffin discusses each ballad as a separate entity,

dividing the variants into groups of texts which on the basis of the story material they contain seem closely related and listing what is presumably the best example of each type. It is difficult to see why Mr. Coffin avoided here the terms *version* and *variant* which seem less cumbersome than his "Story Type A," "Story Type B," etc., for though his system gives us an equivalent for the term *version* it does not supply us with an equivalent for the term *variant*. The looseness with which the older terminology has been used of late, however, may be sufficient excuse for its avoidance.

A division into "Story Types" or "Versions," call them what one will, is, of course, frequently an arbitrary sort of thing. If one is concerned with the relationship which may exist between one text and another, such divisions may be misleading. To illustrate this, let us look at Mr. Coffin's discussion of the story types of Child Ballad #20, "The Cruel Mother."

Story Types: A: "Leaning her back against a thorn," a woman bears her father's clerk two (or more) illegitimate children. These babies she murders with a pen-knife, buries, and deserts. Later, she sees some children playing ball. She tells them that if they were hers she would treat them in fine style. However, they inform her that they are the children she bore and murdered and usually tell her she is fated to dwell in Hell.

Examples: Barry (A); Cox, *F-S South* (A); Davis (A).

B: Sometimes an additional group of stanzas is found on a Type A version in which the mother is told the penance she must do for her crime. She must spend twenty-one years ringing a bell and existing in various bestial forms. In some texts the mother expresses a preference for such a fate over the going to Hell.

Examples: Creighton; MacKenzie, *Bids Sea Sgs N Sc*; Thompson.

Two questions immediately present themselves: (1) why does not Mr. Coffin create a "Story Type C" to account for those variants in which the mother expresses a preference for bell-ringing over dwelling in Hell? or (2) how can Mr. Coffin be sure that those variants which he classes in "Story Type A" are not merely fragmentary variants of those found in "Story Type B"? Similar questions might be raised about his analyses of many other ballads, but, on the whole, these analyses and the discussions which immediately follow them appear to be both learned and sane; they might well form the basis for a comprehensive edition of the British ballad as it is found in North America.

The solid accomplishment of Mr. Coffin's analyses and discussions is enhanced by the detailed textual bibliographies which accompany each entry. The book's usefulness would have been increased had the geographical distribution in the United States and Canada been given for each ballad by listing text sources by states—as in Belden's Missouri collection—rather than alphabetically by author or journal. Such an arrangement would have made it more feasible to report which volumes merely reprint earlier texts: for example, the text of "The Cherry Tree Carol" given by McGill in *JAF*, XXIX, 293-94 (plus the tune given on page 417, not listed by Coffin) was reprinted without tune by Miss Pound, but with it in Smith and Ruffy as well as in McGill's own book. And, although we realize that one must set a bourn to any publishable work, it does seem unfortunate that Mr. Coffin saw fit to exclude from his bibliographies the published American tunes, references in books and articles which do not contain texts, and any mention of phonograph records. Neither the first nor the last receives any attention, though more and more scholars are coming to realize that one cannot separate texts and tunes, that, in the words of Mrs. Hogg, when you do so ". . . ye hae spoilt them a' thegither. They were made for singing, an' no for reading; . . ." and future scholars and collectors will not be able to ignore the possible influence upon oral tradition of commercial recordings. In his discussions Mr. Coffin frequently refers to the more significant articles and books which deal with particular ballads, but there is no systematic presentation of this material except in his very selective "General Bibliography" given on pages 173-181.

It was inescapable, of course, that in listing the textual references for the 140 ballads which he discusses Mr. Coffin was to miss some items. He is indeed to be congratulated on the extraordinary fullness of his listings. We should, however, like to add the following notes and comments, the briefness of which should attest to the definitiveness of Mr. Coffin's lists.

Child 8 (secondary form): "The Soldier Boy," *The Kentucky Folk-Lore and Poetry Magazine*, II, No. 4 (January, 1928), 5-7. No tune.

Child 10: To the discussion section should be added a reference to Paul G. Brewster, "The Geographical Distribution of 'The Two Sisters,'" *Anuario de la Sociedad Folklorica de Mexico*, V (1944), 49-54 (Spanish translation, pp. 55-61). And a correction: in the discussion of this ballad on page 40 the first line of the curious Michigan B text (which from its tune and text appears to be a children's game version) is "Peter and I went down the lane," not "Peter and Paul." It might also be indicated that the Mich-

igan A text refrains belong to the "Binnorie, O, Binnorie" tradition.

Child 12: "Durango," *The Crimson Rambler*, VIII, No. 4, Tonkawa, Oklahoma; "Henry," *Promenade*, IV, No. 3 (1943), 2.

Child 40: The sole extant American text of this ballad was collected by Arthur Beatty from a Wisconsin University student, Claude H. Eldred. Mr. Eldred got his texts of this and other ballads (Nos. 26, 27, and 181) from a Mrs. McLeod of Dumfries, Scotland, who was visiting friends in Wisconsin. In each of the other instances other American variants have been found, but although it is conceivable that Mrs. McLeod may have brought this ballad into oral tradition, it seems hardly fair to claim it until other American variants are found.

Child 54: Three Kentucky texts in *JAFL*, LI (1938), 15-16; June Clark, in "Twelfth Night: A Folk Miracle-Play of Carolina," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, (December, 1932), 1018, published the following stanza, printed, as here, in three lines:

"When Joseph were an old man

An old man were he,

He hitched ter the Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee."

Child 78: Correct the statement, page 83, that American versions of this ballad "... follow Child B and C in the sex of the mourner." The sex of the mourner is reversed in the text given in Niles, *More Songs of the Hill-Folk*, No. 9. In that version the man weeps for the girl, in this respect following Child A.

Child 81: "Tomper's Song," E.C.L. Adams, *Nigger to Nigger*, (New York, 1928). This is a South Carolina negro text.

Child 95: C. A. Smith, "The Negro and the Ballad," *The Alumni Bulletin*, University of Virginia, 1912.

Child 105: "The Bailer's Daughter of Ireland Town," *JAFL*, LII (1939), 54.

Child 155: Add "The Blue Drum Boy" to the list of local titles. An Indiana title.

Child 200: "Black Jack Davy," *The Kentucky Folk-Lore and Poetry Magazine*, II, No. 4 (January, 1928), 7-8. No tune.

Child 243: "The House Carpenter," *The Kentucky Folk-Lore and Poetry Magazine*, II, No. 2 (July, 1927), 7-8; No. 4 (January, 1928), 17-19. No tunes.

Child 286: Ruth Moore, *Spoonhandle*. (New York: Morrow, 1946).

One further comment about the textual bibliographies is perhaps necessary. Presumably since the texts have not been published, Mr. Coffin did not utilize the 1942 title list of recordings in *The*

Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress. Unfortunately, however, this does not excuse his failure to discuss the ballads included in the important phonograph albums of folksongs issued by the Archive. The printed texts of these ballads are available on leaflets which may be purchased apart from the records. References to the following Child ballad texts from these albums should therefore be added to the headnotes: Nos. 1, 3, 7, 10, 13, 49, 53, 73, 79, 84 (two versions), 93, 170, 173, 200, 243, 274, 278, 286, and the "Coast of Barbary" derivative of 285.

The tremendous interest and value of the main body of Mr. Coffin's book has led us to neglect his introductory essay "A Description of Variation in the Traditional Ballad of America" and his final, related chapter, "An Index to Borrowing in the Traditional Ballads of America." (Reprinted from *JAF*, LXII, 156-161). Both are significant contributions to ballad scholarship.

Study of textual variation in ballads began with ballad editing, and it is the unusual editor or collector who has failed to indicate at least one or two textual peculiarities in the variants which he had at hand. Interesting as such phenomena may be, however, textual variants by no means account for the re-creational force in ballads. In most instances textual variation is a degenerating force. In an illuminating discussion of "Story change, that is the alteration of the actual plot or basic mood of the ballad . . ." Mr. Coffin points out a far more significant kind of variation in ballads: the kind of change which is brought about by such things as sentimentalization, moralization, literalness, function, and mergers. The importance of Mr. Coffin's initial chapter cannot be stressed too strongly if for no other reason than that it is replete with suggestions for further, more detailed study.

The British Traditional Ballad in North America is an indispensable book for the student of American balladry; it belongs in the same place on his bookshelf as Wells' *Manual* belongs on the shelf of the medievalist. Indeed, it forms a part of the chapter which Professor Wells decided to omit from his book. It is to be hoped that future publications in the American Folklore Society's *Bibliographical Series* will be up to the high standards which Mr. Coffin's book has set.

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Murray, Kentucky

W. Edson Richmond

Herbert Halpert

Notes, News, and Queries continued from page 40.

The Ohio Folklore Society. The Ohio Folklore Society held its fall meeting at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, on November 4, 1950. About 100 persons attended the meeting. A constitution was ratified at this meeting and the following papers were read: Edward T. Price, "The Carmel Mixed Bloods"; William T. Utter, "Remarks on Early American Woodwinds"; and Samuel P. Bayard, "The State of the Singing Tradition in Pennsylvania." Later Erwin C. Zepp discussed the role of the folklorists in the 1953 Ohio Sesquicentennial Celebration, W. Edson Richmond outlined the plans for *MIDWEST FOLKLORE*, and William Hugh Jansen addressed the dinner concerning experiences had while collecting folklore.

International Folk Music Council. Volume III of the *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, which is due for publication in March, 1951, will be of particular interest to readers in the United States, for it will contain the proceedings of the third Conference of the International Folk Music Council which was held at Indiana University last July. The Conference was attended by seventy members representing twelve countries. The principal themes of study were "Imported and Indigenous Elements in the Folk Music of the American Continents," "Authenticity in Folk Music," and "The Interdependence of Folk Music and Art Forms." Papers on these subjects by the following authors will be printed in the *Journal*:

Marius Barbeau, Jonas Balys, Samuel P. Bayard, Paul Brewster, Bertrand H. Bronson, Elizabeth Burchenal, Ake Campbell, Herbert Halpert, George Herzog, George Pullen Jackson, Jasim-uddin, Maud Karpeles, Ayala Kaufman, Sarah Gertrude Knott, Gertrude Prokosch Kurath, Sirvart Poladian, Albert Lord, Ben Gray Lumpkin, Warren E. Roberts, A. A. Saygun, Olcott Sanders, Charles Seeger, Ivan H. Walton, and R. A. Waterman.

The *Journal* will also contain reviews of publications and general notes on folk music.

In addition to the *Journal*, the Council publishes occasional Bulletins and other literature. *A Manual for Folk Music Collectors* is being prepared and will be published shortly.

In each country the Council works through individual folk music specialists who are appointed as Correspondents. The United States Correspondents are:

- Professor Samuel P. Bayard (State College, Pennsylvania)
 Mr. Paul Brewster (Henderson State Teachers College,
 Arkadelphia, Arkansas)
 Professor Bertrand H. Bronson (University of California)
 Dr. Elizabeth Burchenal (Folk Arts Center, New York)
 Mrs. Sidney Robertson Cowell (New York)
 Dr. Duncan Emrich (Library of Congress, Washington,
 D.C.)
 Mr. Percy Grainger (New York)
 Dr. Herbert Halpert (Murray State College, Murray,
 Kentucky)
 Dr. George Herzog (Indiana University, Bloomington,
 Indiana)
 Dr. George Pullen Jackson (Nashville, Tennessee)
 Mrs. Gertrude Prokosch Kurath (Ann Arbor, Michigan)
 Mr. Alan Lomax (New York)
 Dr. Albert Lord (Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass-
 achusetts)
 Mr. John Powell (Richmond, Virginia)
 Dr. Herman Reichenbach (Wilson College, Pennsylvania)
 Professor Curt Sachs (New York)
 Mr. Charles Seeger (Washington, D.C.)
 Dr. Carlton Sprague Smith (New York Public Library)
 Professor Stith Thompson (Indiana University, Bloom-
 ington, Indiana)
 Professor Evelyn Wells (Wellesley College)

The next Conference is being held at Zagreb, Yugoslavia from September 8th to 14th, 1951. A Festival of Folk Music will be especially arranged for Conference members in which dancers, singers, and instrumentalists from all regions of Yugoslavia will be represented.

The Annual subscription to the Council is three dollars and to the *Journal* only \$1.50. Further information and particulars may be obtained from The Honorary Secretary, Miss Maud Karpeles, The International Folk Music Council, 12, Clorane Gardens, London, N.W. 3.

Annual subscriptions to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* are \$3.00 to libraries, schools, and individuals not members of cooperating regional folklore societies; members of cooperating regional societies may subscribe to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* for \$2.50 if their subscriptions are made through the treasurers of their respective societies. Single copies may be obtained for \$1.00. Correspondence regarding subscriptions and business matters should be directed to the Business Manager, Professor Jonas Balys, Library, Room 41, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Articles for publication should be submitted to the appropriate Regional Editor or directly to the Editor, W. Edson Richmond, Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Books for review should be sent to the Review Editor, Herbert Halpert, Department of Languages and Literature, Murray State College, Murray, Kentucky. Offprints of articles and references intended for mention in the "Annual Bibliography of Midwestern Folklore" should be sent to Richard Dorson, Department of History, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan.

Manuscripts submitted for publication should be typed double-spaced on 8½ x 11 paper; footnotes should be typed double-spaced with a triple space between each note at the end of the article. Titles of books and journals should be italicized; titles of articles, chapters of books, poems, reports, etc., should be placed in quotation marks. A style sheet is available on request.